THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

C. C. MARTINDALE

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THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

BY THE

REV. C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

THIS is the general title of a series comprising studies of the lives and work of the Saints. These studies are not meant to be complete biographies, but they attempt to offer, alike, a human portrait of the Saint in question, and a psychological estimate of his personality, and a spiritual impression. "The Household of God" is divided into its departments: thus, PRINCES OF HIS PEOPLE is a sub-title intended to cover studies of St. John and of St. Paul, and perhaps a few other commanding figures, like St. Augustine; IN GOD'S ARMY has already appeared, and contains studies of eight Saints of the militant Society of Jesus, themselves grouped as COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, CAPTAINS OF CHRIST, and CHRIST'S CADETS. ON GOD'S

HOLY HILLS contains chapters on the men contemplatives or mystics, of whom three eminent instances are grouped together as THE GUIDES. It is hoped that GOD'S SECRET GARDEN will comprise studies of women mystics; and that other groups will follow, as of great churchmen, theologians, laymen-saints, children, and so on. And the groups already indicated may be expanded.

In this way, a comprehensive and yet humanly vivid and vital picture of Catholic sanctity may, after a while, be formed, true at once to Catholic spirit, to history, and to modern feeling.

"The Household of God" Series.

PRINCES OF HIS PEOPLE

I.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Nihil Obstat.

F. THOMAS BERGH, O.S.B.

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PRINCES OF HIS PEOPLE

I.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

(I)

BY

C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J. (1879–)

AUTHOR OF

"ON GOD'S HOLY HILLS," "IN GOD'S ARMY," ETC.

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OFFERING

To-night, when the streets are loud, and the day has been all congratulations, how should I not think of you ?

To you, Norman, I always meant to dedicate anything I wrote about St. John. In few whom I have met have I seen the Life he writes of take fire and burn so radiantly. I remember, when first I met you at that luncheon-party, I thought it never would. During those months after your first crash we scarcely spoke of religion, till the day when you hobbled out of hospital after me and asked to be "instructed." The weeks went by: then followed your retreat, when you watched, with tears in your eyes, those lads make the Communion you joined in still but spiritually. You became a Catholic; the glory never died out of your soul: you, too, "burned and shone." Then came November: almost straight from Communion you went

to see God. Why was it that that whole aerodrome so grieved for you ? Why that the big school near by tolled its bell and sent music and firing-party to your funeral, though it scarcely knew you and you were not of its sons ? You had communicated your life. Christ promised that should be.

Very well; here is this little book: take it, not just " in memory ": you are not absent.

Con, you came—how reluctantly ! but with your friend, a Protestant, to please him—to that same retreat. When, months before, I first saw you, with your cold eye and that jaw of yours, at once I knew I wouldn't rest until you *did* come. Well, now you know what you owe to Geoff for persuading you. Was it a whole year afterwards, when you'd again been wounded, that we met in London and so enjoyed ourselves ? I recognized then how God had laboured at you. I can't keep you out of this Dedication, when I remember what unlooked-for affection you gave me, and your constant letters, always ending " For God's sake don't forget your daily S.O.S.; I rely on it." I didn't forget, and I don't now, though it's changed to *requiescas;* and though I rely,

I really do rely, on you. You'd written home about these things, and from Australia has come back, more than once, the echo of your voice.

And to-night, Charlie, I am giving up the hope of finishing, for you, the book of cheery tales you asked for. "Dicky Travers," in whom you fancied you recognized yourself, isn't likely to advance. I am only half sorry not to have a separate present to offer you. *In sidera sidereus.* Nothing would have been worthy at all of you. And besides yourself, I have to thank you for the love of those two others, given for your sake, and whom without you I'd never have known. Well, the "little bits of silk" you laughed at me for pulling at you with aren't necessary now. The June day was radiant, rightly radiant, when I heard that God had sent for you.

Nor will you want me to exclude from to-night's memory the others: George, Dick, Ulric, Roy; Charlie again, loyal after so many years, and the only one of that old class not to return, save George, and you, Aidan, whom after that long interval I met again, and found how strongly life had dealt with you.

You, too, could deal strongly: your V.C. proved that; and death showed you remembered me more than I'd have guessed. And you, Jackie, the first to be my friend in that new bit of my life; and Jack again; and Dick, poor lad! unspoilt, though the price of innocence seemed at times so heavy. Oscar, shall I put your name too, for your father's sake and Charlie's? Cuthbert, Sidney, Peter, Hughie; and you other Hugh, with whom (I was forgetting it!) I actually *read* St. John, and I know his light well penetrated the poisoned incense of those *messes noires*. No, I haven't fears for you; I never had. Nigel, Alexander, Gerald, Maurice, you, too, V.C.'d, and "the first to fall"; George, Geoffrey, Edward, for whom it seems so strange to ask "rest"—peace I know you needed. I think you found it, after those weeks' effort to make the spiritual choice you *did* make; please God you kept it. And you, John, whom I never met, but whose letters used to reach me from your ill-fated ship, and Greek and Egyptian seas. God fails no man's will: He will not have allowed the explosion to drive you out of His hand. Had you hold of

Him? I'm not sure. But He had of you, and that's good enough.

Jackie, for you, your friend and I tried to write what you'd have owned as truthful. Bob, for you, your sister and I. David, who made your sacrifice just as the end was dawning, your brother and I. (And here I must put your names, Cuthbert and Walter, whom I watched pass to priesthood, lives offered with Christ's in your daily Mass, and taken up in sacrifice, now at the very end.) Tommy, to you I gave the little prayer-book. So, of the better-loved names, there's only yours, John, I haven't mentioned, and yours, Joe; your cadetship finished, God took you undelaying, hardly a day or two after your cheery visit of good-bye, when I, too, was a little sick of the illness to which you yielded, quite at the beginning of your last leave at home. . . .

"Of the better loved names . . ." But there are so many others; and to-night, when you come trooping almost into my very eyes, it seems wrong to call one "better" and one "less." And you thousands, nameless for me, but not for You, my God, nor for their

kin who may forget to pray for them; and all those others still, enemies, as this world made them—not enemies, I pray, now, or then, of Yours. Not You need "cast them out." To You may we all come, through Him who in Your servant's Gospel tells us that He is Life and Resurrection.

November 11, 1918, *Armistice.*

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PRINCES OF HIS PEOPLE

I

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

INTRODUCTION

I WISH to make clear, first, what this short book is not meant to be. It is not a commentary on St. John's Gospel, nor yet a " life " of Christ drawn from it; nor yet any complete exposition of the doctrine contained in it. Still less is it a critical examination of its authenticity, reliability, date, or sources. Biblical handbooks supply that to students. It is not meant to be " scholarly " at all, nor to accumulate opinions, nor to display erudition. Nor yet is it meant to be merely pious meditations " based " upon St. John.

But I have wished to write these pages for three reasons, in the main: first, because I love St. John's Gospel beyond all other Christian literature (and Christian literature beyond all other in the world), and would experience a unique happiness were I to assist, in any least way, others too to love it better; second, because I value in a supreme degree that

doctrine of the Supernatural Life which is its peculiar theme; and third, because I have very often found that St. John's Gospel, methodically read, somehow puts vitality into certain fundamental dogmatic notions concerning Grace, Faith, Communion and the like, which have been held with docility and, indeed, reverence, but which have not yet exerted their full power upon the soul, nor been actively identified with a man's conscious convictions. I have noticed again and again the positive exultation of spirit which those have experienced who have learned to construe St. John, and to realize their own supernatural possessions in the light of the guiding notions I try to disengage. It is, then, certain *guiding notions*, directive ideas, organic doctrines—what you will: I will try below to explain these phrases better—which I hope to set forth in order; thus striving to reach the mind of St. John himself, and through him the mind of Christ. St. John, in writing, had a purpose and plan, as well as a message: that is what we want to see, even to understand the message as he gives it. Thus, much that in any theological treatise,

even upon St. John, would have been included, is here omitted. But what is said will not prove false to the bearing and intention of the whole.

These are half-way pages. We have all read St. John; we do not want to *end* with reading anything whatsoever *upon* him merely; but perhaps after studying even the humblest page upon him, we may be able to re-read himself almost as a new thing. ***Dominus dirigat.***

Reprinted, by the courtesy of the Editor, from "The Catholic World," August-October, 1919.

I

ST. JOHN

"Volat avis sine meta
Quo nec vates nec propheta
Evolavit altius.
Tam implenda quam impleta
Nunquam vidit tot secreta
Purus homo purius."

JOHN was the son of a well-to-do Galilean fisherman and his wife Salome; his name means "Jehovah has been gracious." He and his brother James were called by Our Lord to follow Him, and they left their father and his hired men in the boat where they had been cleaning nets and joined Andrew and Peter, who had been called somewhat earlier. There is little to be known about his character in those earlier days; but what little there is points all one way. It was he and James who, hotly jealous for Our Lord's honour, cried out that He should blast by thunderbolt the Samaritan village which had refused Him

hospitality, and learned from Him that not yet they understood that Spirit of His which was to be also theirs. Themselves, He gently rebuked them, were like thunderbolts—" sons of the thunder," in His language, will have had that meaning: not such the ancestry of those " reborn " of whom John was himself, one day, to write. John, too, and James it was for whom their mother was to beg the two chief places in that destined kingdom which she, like them, still so much misunderstood; and John who, indignant because the privilege of the band of Apostles had been disregarded, complained to Jesus that he had seen a man performing miracles in His Name, who did not " follow with " the Twelve. " We forbade him," said the angry young man, and was, here too, rebuked.

But Jesus had a special affection for the hot-headed and ambitious brothers, and kept them close to Himself, with Peter, the chief of His Church-to-be. And, indeed, it was to John alone that the name " beloved disciple " became attached. It was he who lay next to Jesus at the Last Supper, so that by leaning his head back he could whisper to Him and

hear His answer, the others unaware; and to him Christ trusted Mary.

Specially loved, and therefore more than others lovable, or destined so to be; for Christ's generous heart, though it detects the good and right, assuredly, where meaner eyes than His can see but the unlovable, still cannot love what neither is, nor shall, nor can be fit for love.

And a strong brain, too, was his. Else he could never have understood, nor even wished or tried to understand, the ideas he *looks towards* in his Gospel. For, we shall see, not only are intuitions there, mystical and sublime, but a purposed attention to the thought that surrounded him. His was not a creative and imperial intellect like Paul's: but it was not shut to the problems, as we should call them, of his day. Nor was erudition destined to be his; he was never drilled, as Paul was, in the minutiæ of current theologies; yet was he well aware of the tendencies of Palestinian and Egyptian and even of Greek thought. Still, all these things occasion no more than isolated details in his writings, or, at most, lend a pale added colour to certain passages; his will be a personality

of quite exceptional force, not a mere mind; and he will cry aloud, in many ways, his message, not as an argument, nor for the sake of critics, but as a declaration, and for its own sake.

But it was long before that personality could fully free and form itself, and act with all its energy. Not less steeped than the others, at the outset, in Jewish prejudice, even in the Acts (where he is seen at work), his place is beside Peter, not Paul. With Peter and James, he perceives Paul's special mission, and gives him leave to preach where he wills; but not yet does John follow him.

It was in old age that he wrote, not even then having fully conquered the Greek language. His native tongue and ways of thought show most clearly through the Greek of the Apocalypse, which, it is not fanciful to argue, may well contain the meditations, as it were, or the "lights in prayer" belonging to a whole series of years, and cast (perhaps under the Emperor Domitian) into the extraordinarily complex form which that book displays. The Gospel, by all tradition, was the work of his extreme old age, written down,

as tradition again suggests, by the intimate disciples of the Apostle, men conversant with his innermost thought, and schooled to listen to his preaching and dictation.

A Catholic can legitimately surmise, should he be so persuaded, that these disciples are responsible for the differences between the Greek of the Gospel and that of the Apocalypse. For though Hebraisms show plainly through the Greek of the Gospel, and though St. John's favourite words and turns of phrase are noticeable in both documents, and though, to my feeling, there is no necessary force whatever in the arguments which would show that the two could not have been written by one man, yet, equally to my feeling, the difference in the Greek is so enormous that it cannot possibly be explained by a mere *improvement* in St. John's knowledge of that tongue, however early you put the Apocalypse, and however late the Gospel. Perhaps St. John may have written two very different Greeks; but that is an harsher hypothesis than that his secretaries improved, somewhat, his style. Thus, the Apocalypse would have come directly from his *pen;* the Gospel indirectly:

yet not indirectly from his *mind;* not like the Second Gospel, which good tradition tells us is practically the preaching of St. Peter, consigned to writing by his friend and secretary Mark, yet must definitely be called "according to Mark," and not "according to Peter;" while it would be wrong to call the Fourth "The Gospel according to John's disciples." It is altogether John's.

There is one other point only to which I should like to refer, closely connected with this hypothesis that the Gospel did not receive its style directly from St. John's pen, nor even a finished shape from any one's. Not only does it appear definitely to end with chapter twenty, only to resume in chapter twenty-one; while chapter twenty-one, verse twenty-four, appears with some probability to be added by a disciple's hand (though neither can this be proved); but the prologue itself seems to me to bear quite evident traces of having been written independently, and to be not quite successfully joined on to a document, beginning, like the Synoptists', with the ministry of the Baptist. Even, there are in it traces of a "double

recension," to my mind quite obvious: the parentheses are awkward, and the thought far from consecutive. This is the theory, in part, of Father Calmes, O.P.,* a writer in no way novel or untrustworthy in his methods and principles. Father Calmes, too, shows well how, by a slight rearrangment of the paragraphs relating to St. Peter's denial, a "harmony" of no artificial sort is at once effected between St. John and the Synoptists. The episode, finally, of the woman taken in adultery, which, though lacking in so many manuscripts, seems to be certainly St. John's, can thus be regarded as an authentic, but detached, narrative of his, inserted by some amanuensis where best he could. These suggestions cannot, of course, be *proved*, any more than the supposition that John himself wrote the Gospel with his own hand exactly as it stands. But they are mentioned because to our mind they explain so much that is puzzling, and are not rash or disconcerting, but well in keeping alike with the evidence of the document itself, and with the decrees of the Biblical Commission concerning it: also

* *Evangile selon St. Jean*, 1906.

they lend vitality to the actual document, and do not leave it hanging, inexplicable, in mid-air. We maintain that, on critical grounds alone, there is no valid reason to suppose that Gospel and Apocalypse and Epistles are not alike the work of John, son of Zebedee, the " beloved " of Our Lord.

John, when he set to work to write his Gospel, did so at a date when the Synoptic records had long been in existence, and were so well known in the Christian community that he could rely upon being able to assume that knowledge in his own readers, and could take it for granted that his own allusions to the events they narrated would be recognized and understood. It was not to be expected that he would simply produce a fourth account just similar to theirs. Nor did he. It has been suggested that he did little more than collect, and make permanent, records of events and sayings omitted by them. This is no doubt true in certain instances. At the opposite extreme, it has been argued that while the Synoptists scarcely meant to do more than *narrate*, to give us facts and tell us things that happened, to write history, in short, in its

most objective form, John, on the other hand, was "subjective," offers us ideas and ideals, beliefs but half disguised in narrative which may be downright fiction, mere allegory; composes, in a word, a sublime but speculative theology, symbolized here and there by scenes from a highly idealized "life" of Christ. The solid information intended to be conveyed, and in fact conveyed, by the Synoptists, is easily to be discerned beneath the thinnest veil of beliefs and ideas; while for such ideas and beliefs, high aspirations, and exquisite spiritual intuition, John's Gospel would be, indeed, a source unique in the world's religious history; but a historical record he neither means it to be nor is it.

The first of these two views, held by few if any, nowadays, is felt to be quite inadequate as an explanation of the divergence between the first three Gospels and St. John's; the second is worse, being (to our mind, and according to the Church's tradition and her recent decrees) positively false, and, indeed, fantastically so. But this is at least true, that the Synoptists intend, on the whole, to narrate; John, on the whole, to preach a

doctrine. But the Synoptists, too, are teaching, and John, too, is telling.

You may say that the Synoptists are servants of their material; strive to be impersonal, to move towards a goal they do not choose, within limits they do not designate: John elects his goal, defines his scope, and creates his method, and masterfully (though not tyrannically nor arbitrarily) disposes of his material to suit a dominant purpose. In other words, his Gospel is composed around, controlled and verified by, a governing or directive idea.

I wish first to define more exactly what I mean by such directive ideas; in order afterwards to seek to indicate what John's were, and in the light of these to re-read his Gospel.

Any literary work has some sort of shape; it is not a mere juxtaposition of phrases and paragraphs; it must have some principle which gives it unity and life. Thus the novel of incident and intrigue is knit into coherence by what we call the plot: or a historical treatise may at least be rounded off by the natural limits of a life, or a reign, or a dynasty. Here ideas are but slightly involved. A period,

however, may be indicated less by its dates than by its temperament or character, or by some policy. Or a whole play may grow round a character, developing or degenerating. We lose everything if we read *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, or *Lear* for the *plot*. In what purports to be sheer history you can often see the shaping power of an idea in the author's mind: thus Grote's *History of Greece* has often been called a panegyric of democracy; Tacitus is swayed, though less, by his belief in aristocracy; Herodotus, coloured throughout by his fixed belief in the Grudge of God, laying the mighty low. Carlyle's *French Revolution* is a deceptive book, so do dominant ideas distort the facts: history in the Old Testament is superbly and fruitfully interpreted from the standpoint of God's direct activity in and for and through the chosen race.* In a cultured

* I mean, its writers never intend to give a complete secular history of the Jews, still less (*e.g.*, in Genesis) of the world, or even an account which, *as secular history*, could be regarded as in perspective. Thus, "secularly," the reign of Omri was of great importance: the chronicler dismisses it with a brief comment on that King's moral behaviour. The action of foreign nations is regarded as that of rebels against, or instruments of, Yahweh, and what has no significance, from that viewpoint, is passed over.

poem, like Virgil's *Æneid*, the unifying principle is far more nearly an idea—thus, Destiny and Eternal Rome—than a man or an event, as in Homer whom, in a sense, he imitates: while in many modern novels or plays, like Tolstoi's or Ibsen's, the idea triumphs till the action or plot is all but symbolical; *Ghosts* is little more than a visualized assertion of heredity: in *Peer Gynt*, the problem of self-realization by way of self-renunciation is whimsically and tragically treated. Zola changed as he went, from a sheer photography of facts to the downright argumentation of a thesis: the episodes and personages lost all value save as premisses in a complex syllogism. Of course, with a Maeterlinck and the symbolists, everything—dialogue, characters, *mise-en-scène*—has ceased to have intrinsic value save as the artistic vehicle used by the directive idea.

Now, in a series of historical writers, John would have a different place from that of the Synoptists. Neither he nor they would coincide with out-and-out symbolists at the one end, nor with mere annalists at the other. But there is more affinity in the Synoptists

with the latter; and in John with the former. He deals, indeed, with history, hands down reliable facts, does not distort nor falsify nor invent them; yet he does select, arrange and interpret them in accordance with his directive ideas. The virtues proper to the Synoptists are, chiefly, industry and fidelity. They collect, compare and combine documents, but even when they edit them, scrupulously respect the written word. Oral tradition they hand on, scarcely interpreting and never re-casting it.* They are channels, not sources; they narrate, not inculcate; reproduce, not reflect.

Of course, the Synoptists are not mere machines. They too have their separate purposes and methods. Luke's are not Mark's by any manner of means. Moreover, their personalities well survive, illuminating even their treatment of identical events. The Palestinian Matthew; the naïve and picturesque Mark; the careful, cultured, yet devout Luke, are no mere stenographers. On the other

* Thus they faithfully adhere to the expression *Son of Man*, abandoned as it seems already to have been by their immediate audience. John keeps his personal style throughout as well as his personal thought.

side, John's historical touch is sure. Many are the details which he remembers accurately, and sets down for their own sake, without actually adding to, or being exacted by, the idea beneath whose spell he yet, at the time, is writing. His theology is well incarnate.

John uses the same facts as the Synoptists do, or other facts historically as true; yet sixty years at least of apostolic toil and meditative prayer separated him from those facts: his powerful personality conditioned his attitude to any fact and selected certain features in the landscape of his retrospect. For the aged author a perspective had been created, otiose details eliminated, hard edges softened, disparate elements fused, interconnections established and an atmosphere interposed. Incidents at first half-understood, even misunderstood, as he confesses, had become illuminated by the light of the *lived* Christian life; no fact could remain mere fact, but became charged with meaning, often with many meanings, and carried him beyond the unprofitable flesh into the realm of the vivifying Spirit.

Hence, in studying this Gospel, we must

cease to read its incidents as though St. John saw in them no spiritual meaning symbolized by the facts; indeed, we must expect and look for one: nor must we read the discourses he in such definite form sets down, as mere reminiscences of words spoken very long ago and included just for memory's sake. Father Lebreton, S.J., in *L'Histoire du Dogme de la Ste Trinité*, a book of incomparable value as an aid to study and to prayer alike, expresses this with his usual subtlety, force, and insight.

"The personal stamp is so strongly impressed upon John's whole work that the book seems woven of one piece throughout, prologue, narrative, discourses. The facts are not related for their own sake . . . they are selected, few . . . developed at great length. Nor are they presented separately, but inserted into theological interpretations which illumine them. . . . Indeed, at times the interpretation and the discourse are so intimately united that it is hard to discern where Christ's speech ends and the Apostle's own reflections begin. One has the impression that the words, like the acts, of Jesus have

been long and lovingly meditated by the writer who records them; they are wholly penetrated by his life and thought, even as they would seem to have modelled John unto their own image. Such being the character of the Johannine Gospel, it were superfluous, we think, and perhaps impossible, to discriminate, in the theological analysis of the book, the discourses of Jesus and the reflections of the Evangelist.

"Distinct as the sources doubtless are, their waters are so intermingled that skilful, indeed, were the eye which would distinguish them. The revelation comes authentically from Jesus; but to-day it is across the soul of St. John that we behold it; John's Gospel is Christ's seamless robe; only in its entirety can it be grasped, else were its texture rent. Yet, though seen only across John's soul, it is Christ's self we see: He is not John's creation."*

Acceptable tradition tells that John became Bishop of Ephesus, and very likely he exercised there the office, as it were, of metropolitan. This is suggested by the covering

* Page 377

letter addressed to the "Seven Churches" of the province of Asia. Of the stories that soon begin to cluster round his name, one still suggests the fiery spirit of his youth: he rushed out of the building in which he had heard the heretic Cerinthus also was; he yielded to his horror of falsehood before his love for the perishing soul had time to triumph. But on the whole the legends are sweet and gentle: the pet partridge he kept and caressed: the robber whom his grave and unresisting courtesy converted: the refrain of his exhortations, that his little children should love one another. But we can see that for all his gentleness, his personality had not weakened; innocence of mind and habit does, indeed, thus preserve and even augment interior strength. Life is his theme, and an intense glow of life was his up to the end. He could pass easily from his earthly habitation into that Eternal Life which he had so long and so firmly watched, and which he knew himself, as we shall see, already to possess. Peace reigned within him, according to Christ's promise; fear had been well cast out by love grown perfect: "While Paul

amazes and enflames, John uplifts, yet calms the soul: Paul cries aloud, dazzles and is dazzled; John's is the pure eye that steadily watches God; and his voice, though it has echoes of the thunder of 'many waters,' is peaceful and serene."

I print many of the quotations in a form nearer to verse than prose. This is done partly to bring out, by their position, certain leading words or phrases: partly because in the Greek itself a very marked rhythm is discernible; partly because the Hebrew method of rhythmic arrangement by parallel, contrast, assonance, and the like, shows with sufficient clearness through the Greek.

II

THE DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL

"No one can grasp the meaning of John's Gospel if he have not leaned upon the breast of Jesus, nor received from Jesus, Mary to be his mother too."*

I

THESE things have been written that you
may believe
That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
And that believing
You might have LIFE in His Name.†

Life is the keynote to John's Gospel. Eternal Life, existing and mysteriously circulating in a group of Three—God, the Father of All; His Eternal Son made man; and men made sons of God.

In the Beginning
Existed the Word;
And the Word was with God
And the Word *was* God . . .
The Word was made flesh
And dwelt amongst us,
full of grace and truth,

* Origen, *In Joann.*, i. 6. † Chap. xx. 31

(And) of His fulness all we have received:
But as many as received Him
To them gave He power to become
Children of God.*
Even as the Father hath
Life in Himself,
So to the Son hath He granted to have
Life in Himself.
Even as the Father
Raiseth the dead and maketh them alive,
Even so the Son,
Whom He wills, them maketh He alive.†
Lo what manner of Love
Hath the Father granted us,
That we be called
Children of God—
And so, indeed, we *are:*
Beloved, even now
Children of God are we,
And not yet hath it been revealed
What we shall be!
(But) he who hath the Son
HATH THE LIFE.‡

Such, then, is the statement of the Mystery. Slowly, and in St. John's own words as far as may be, we shall try to study, and gradually evolve and put in order its rich contents.

"Perchance the mercy of God will be with us, that all may be satisfied, and that each

* Chap. i. 1, 14, 16, 12. † Chap. v. 26, 21.
‡ 1 John iii. 1, 2, v. 12.

may take what he can. For he too who speaks saith but what he can. For speak the thing as it is—who can do that? I dare to say, my brethren, perchance not even John spake *that*, but he, too, only what he could. For he spoke of God, being but man; inspired no doubt by God, yet still a man. Being inspired, he spoke somewhat; uninspired, he had spoken naught: but being a man inspired, he spake—not all that is; but what a man can speak, that spake he."*

The prologue to the Fourth Gospel is like the façade to a royal palace. Through its gate you pass to courts and vestibule, and only by degrees reach to the inmost dwelling-place. And on the façade is blazoned, in sumptuous and comprehensive symbolism, which the patient and instructed eye may gradually, if it will, decipher, the full estate and titles of the Lord and Master. Somewhat so, the prologue sets forth, in its mysterious fashion, all that the Gospel will contain. Yet so strange, at first, is that setting-forth, that its reader may be bewildered, disheartened at the outset, half-

* St. Augustine, *Tr. in Joann.*, i. 1

convinced that not for him is intended an entry to the audience-chamber. Best, perhaps, first to grow accustomed to John's doctrine and to his style, and then, returning, re-read the prologue, and, without analysis, become straightway aware of what it tells.

This much of it, however, must be marked down from the outset. John speaks in it of a Declaration, an Utterance from God, God's *Word*, and with the nature and the rôle of this Word, the career and preaching of the Baptist are (in a rhythmic, interwoven style) accaccurately balanced.*

"In the Beginning, existed the Word:" "There came into existence a man." "And the Word existed along with God:" "Sent from God." "And the Word *was* God:" "His name was John."

The Word revealed God, the Invisible, by expressing Him in and through Creation; in and into that Creation He came, a Light sufficient for every man, that they might know and come to the Father. Yet that very

* In a technical discussion of the text, it would be easy to show that there is a likelihood of a *first draft* of this Gospel having begun, like the Synoptic gospels, with the statement of the Baptist's preaching

Light so fills men's eyes that they are no more conscious of it; the endlessly ringing Word ceases to be audible in their ears. The Word and the Light, Eternal Witnesses, themselves need a witness, a herald, an interpreter. Even when the Word became incarnate, and was *man*, accessible to eye and ear and touch, not forthwith might He meet recognition. Therefore was John sent, John, the Lamp that might school men's weakened vision to tolerate the Light; the Voice that would enable them to listen to the Word. John led to Jesus; that is his whole function; by way of the outer court of John's preaching, we may pass inwards, but only so. Then shall remain "Jesus only," the Revelation of the Father; but till then we must give ear to, and then, transcend, the Baptist's witness.

From the account, therefore, of the Baptist's activities, everything which does not bear directly on this character of witness is, in this Gospel, eliminated—birth, death, manner of life, style of preaching, even the baptism itself of Christ. *That* the readers can be assumed as knowing well enough

already.* The Evangelist presents accordingly a sort of series of tableaux; medallions, displaying John's witness to Jesus, and the progressive transference of the leading rôle, hitherto the Baptist's, to Christ.

The official representatives of the Jewish Church come out to investigate the mysterious preacher. "Who are you?" they ask, going straight to the point. "I am *not* the Christ." "Who then? We must carry back an answer. How do you define yourself?" "I am His Herald; I am the one who cries in the wilderness, 'Make ready the road of the Lord.'" "Why, then, if you hold no personal authority, do you baptize? That implies more than heraldship." "Ah! baptize I do, indeed—with water . . ." and the Evangelist does not even trouble to finish the famous sentence, so well known from the Synoptists: not the destined character of Christ's fiery spirit baptism is what he here wants to emphasize, but—once more—the witness to a Person; a Person unseen as yet; an invisible Presence; a Reality unrecog-

* Notice, *e.g.*, chap. i. 19: "This is the witness of John, on the occasion when . . ." The incident is regarded as known, and can be thus alluded to.

nized, but destined shortly to be manifested, and so transcendent of all who had preceded Him that to Him he, the austere Baptist, was yet not worthy to pay the humblest service.

Therefore, in this first episode the Baptist has declared: "I am not *He*. But to Him I witness, and He is here. . . ."

In the next, he can point to Him and say: "He is *there*. That is He! That is the Prophesied. God's Lamb, Who lifts upon Himself, and carries away, the sin not of the People only, but of the world. I know Him now, not because of any personal, private conviction that the Jesus, Who was my boyhood's playmate, was Messiah; but because I have seen the authoritative sign, the heavenly Witness, God's Spirit, given to and remaining upon Him. That was the point of my coming to baptize, that I might afford the occasion for the giving of the Sign: now it is given, and I indicate to you, on God's testimony, the Son of God."*

* Notice always how, exactly in proportion as the Evangelist's force of inspiration, as it were, increases, his language becomes more and more personal, phrased as his personal instinct prefers. Chap. i. 26 already is Johannine, rather than Baptist diction: Chap. i. 29-34

Thereupon, the transference takes place. The Baptist sees Jesus walking to and fro, and repeats, to the two disciples who are with him at the moment, his witness: "Look! God's Lamb!" At once the two disciples, and with them the whole religious movement, begin to pass to Jesus. The converts summon others; finally, in the case of Nathanael, Jesus takes the initiative, acts in His own person, and calls the Israelite to his side.

For a while (for we will here say all that need be said about the Baptist) John's personal work goes on. He still baptizes,* at Ænon near Salem, "because there were many springs of water there." Although, till he shall have been imprisoned and at last put to death, the career of Jesus will not, as it were, reach its full liberty of expansion, yet

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grows utterly Johannine in style; it is hard to say whether 34 is even meant to be in the mouth of the Baptist, and not rather an ecstatic summing up of the Evangelist himself. In fact, here is a good example of the two streams intermingling: both Baptist and Evangelist are making, in substance, an identical affirmation. Evangelist wishes to say the *thing* Baptist said; Baptist can be shown saying it in the *way* Evangelist would speak.

* Chap. iii. 22-30.

Jesus, too, is baptizing, and "everyone," they say, "is going to Him." John's remaining disciples are zealous for their master's honour, and complain. Gladly the Baptist marks his own eclipse. "No one," he says, "can arrogate to himself a position in the world's spiritual progress—and fill it (he implies) aright, but it must be *given* to him by God. Such is what Jesus holds." "I always declared," he reminds them, "that I was not the Christ. He who possesses the Bride"—the old image of the Jewish people or the Elect—"is one only, the Bridegroom. I am not he. But," continues this noble and loyal and most generously unselfish of allies, there exists, too, the office of the Bridegroom's friend. That position I can and do claim. Enough that he can stand, even silent, at his friend's side, and hear the beloved voice. . . . *That* is his joy, and that is mine; yes, and my joy is full to overflowing. He must increase; but I diminish."

And the Evangelist, filled with a sympathetic ecstasy of joy, spreads here his wings, and rises to behold the Supremest Witness, Who "leaving not the Father's side," and

being above all, yet is descending from that Highest, and speaks of what He has ever seen, and ever heard; unlike that noblest yet human witness, who being born of earth, at best speaks words of earth. What if the Heavenly Witness win no hearing? Some hearing at least He wins, and he who hears, knows unerringly and, in turn, affirms and seals his affirmation that the words of God are true. For God's words are spoken by God's Witness; in its entirety and not by dole and meanness of measure, God has placed in Him His Spirit. The Father *loves* the Son, and all things has He to Him made over.

Twice more, the Evangelist makes mention of the Baptist. "You sent to John," Christ says,* "and he indeed bore witness to the Truth. John was the lamp that flames and shines, and for a while you were content to exult in his rays." Yet even so, John but *carried* his light; and a Light there was more brilliant still, the World's Light, which Christ not only bore but was.

And later still,† when Christ went back to where He started, to where John first

* Chap. v. 33-35. † Chap. x. 41.

baptized, the Baptist's witness recurred to the people's memory, and they avowed that though never a "sign" worked John, all that he had said of Jesus had been verified. And thus the Baptist's life of unbroken renunciation achieves its consistent end: Jesus is glorified in and for Himself, and the Voice can vanish into silence. The True Light could never be imprisoned by the Darkness;* but the witness to the Light, his function fulfilled, found for human destiny the dungeon only and the axe.†

We have passed the great Gate and the outer Court; a double porch, as it were, still is left to us, before we enter fully.

By two brief scenes John prepares us, in a wide and general way, for the detailed doctrine that Christ is come to work a transformation, and put a new Life into the world. The two events he tells are treated only in their universal bearing as symbolical: indeed,

* Chap. i. 5.

† Notice the generous *equity* of the Evangelist. He is clearly looking towards a certain contemporary tendency unduly to exalt the person and mission of the Baptist. Firmly he puts him into his proper rank. Yet no more royal panegyric of John the Baptist ever can be written than this by John Evangelist.

it is only by an already believing mind, already equipped with Christian faith and standards of interpretation and the understanding of St. John's method, that the rich meaning of the historical incidents can be grasped, and then, if you choose, devoutly elaborated. So the witnesses of those scenes were themselves to realize.

A marriage is taking place;* the guests make merry, but the wine they drink is poor, and once Jesus and his disciples add themselves to the company, insufficient. His mother calls to Him for help. He orders six great water-jars to be filled with water, jars that stood there for the "purification," that is, the ritual ablutions of the Jews. Jesus changes the water into a generous wine. Even so, the best that men had had wherewith to slake their spiritual thirst, stood revealed as but thin wine, or insipid water, once Christ had entered; but *His* coming brought about a transformation, and provided a mysterious rich drink, that none but He could offer.†

* Chap. ii 1.

† As an example of an *over-materialist* refinement on the history of this miracle, I suggest the comment that Christ's wedding-gift was on a generous scale indeed.

The Making of the Water into Wine is followed, and supplemented by the Cleansing of the Temple.* Christ found it desecrated, and become a house of traffic. He scourged the sacrilegists out of it, and declared that should it be destroyed, He would raise it "in three days." Long afterwards, the disciples realized He had been speaking, in the Truth of things, of Himself. The religion of the Jews, the Jewish Church, all that the Temple stood for already was defiled, and was destined to apostatize, and did destroy itself. For that, Christ substituted Himself; *He* was to be the Centre, the Shrine, of the Life that

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So vast a supply of wine must have stocked the bridegroom's cellar for many a long day. . . . And as an over-refinement of symbolical interpretation, I quote the notion that Our Lady here represents the Synagogue, or Jewish Church, in which Our Lord was, strictly speaking, born. Conscious of the spiritual destitution of her friends, she begs help from Him Whom she, in her heart, recognizes as her Saviour. But no such minute application of the narrative to the thing symbolized is in place in St. John's Gospel, though it would be hard to outdo St. Augustine, not to dwell on the Alexandrian theologians, in this department. The worst indignity the story has suffered is at the hands of Protestant commentators of the olden school, who used it as a weapon against devotion to Our Lady.

* Chap. ii. 13-22.

He was bringing. No purification of the old faith would have been adequate, and anyhow, the Jews rejected both cleansing and Cleanser. Legend told that the Ark had been carried by a prophet into hiding, to be brought back in triumph to the Messianic Temple. In the Apocalypse, John's vision of the City is more rich and true:

> And a Temple saw I not in her:
> For God the All-Governor is her Temple,
> And the Lamb.*

Himself is the Temple into which organically are built those columns who are His elect, a living Temple, Christ and His Christians, incorporate.

But not yet has John reached thus far in his doctrine. Henceforward, however, it is into the full secret of that doctrine that he advances.

II

It was night; and to Our Lord came Nicodemus, a religious authority among the Jews, and a wealthy and cultured man (his name is Greek).

* Chap. xxi. 22.

"Sir," he began, "we know that you are come from God as a teacher. . . ."

It was a modest and honourable introduction, but Jesus breaks off the human courtesies and the discussion so pleasantly suggested. He *proclaims*, and forthwith the atmosphere of the scene is altered: the dark house turns definitely into a House of God.

> In solemn truth I tell thee . . .
> Unless a man be *reborn*,
> He cannot see the Kingdom of God.

Nicodemus smiles. "Be born again? How can that happen?" And his thought travels back over his many years. "An old man . . . become a child once more?"

Our Lord reiterates His doctrine.

> Unless a man be born
> Of water and of spirit,
> He cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.
> That which has come into being from the flesh
> Is flesh.
> That which has come into being from the Spirit
> Is spirit.
> So do not be astonished that I have said to thee,
> "You must be re-born."

Until we are accustomed to the method of these discourses, we must of necessity break their thread with comments else to be regretted.

Notice, then, that these conversations of Our Lord lasted a long time. Yet they may fill not more than a page in our New Testaments. John gives Christ's *doctrine.* Moreover, he "schematizes" it; he gives to it, quite regularly, a form. Our Lord begins with a phrase that is half-commonplace and yet a challenge; a sentence which you might well look for and find in the Synoptists. In it, He habitually makes use of a certain ambiguity; His expression is susceptible of an obvious, and of a more spiritual, interpretation. So here, He uses a phrase which can mean, "be born a second time," or, "be born from above." (In fact, twice already has He so spoken; for the word which can mean spirit can also mean the "wind.") His hearers invariably fasten on that interpretation for which they are by temperament prepared; the grosser, that is, the more materialist alternative. Then Christ explains, moves forward, deserts the lower plane for the super-

natural, leading up to the enunciation of some "Heavenly Thing" which is precisely that to which the whole discourse tends. But, as the glory of the doctrine grows, John's interior ecstasy gathers proportionate: the conversations rarely *finish;* seldom are we told "what happened then"; nor even Christ's last words. Insensibly the divine speech melts into the Evangelist's. For a few sentences the one shines through the other, like a sapphire through a diamond. Then you can see distinctly that it is John who thinks and writes.

Yet even so, John's own thought is not single. Indeed, whose is? Assuredly not any poet's nor any mystic's. Assuredly not this supreme among mystics has one level in his consciousness only. Thus, take the phrase, "to be born of water and spirit." Does that refer to baptism? Most certainly. After a lifetime of baptizing, and believing the doctrine he did, John could not possibly have used that phrase without the idea of baptism being well to the forefront of his mind. But does it allude to baptism *only?* A new birth composed of water poured and

Spirit given? Or, would Nicodemus, at any rate, accustomed to the water baptisms of the Jews, and of the Baptist in particular, have realized that to those water baptisms, which at best were purificatory, must be added a spirit baptism, vivificatory? Good though they were, those old religious rites remained in the sphere of things "natural," things of earth and flesh; to them must be added a new thing, a thing from above, of fire and spirit. And that is, indeed, the doctrine of this Gospel and definitely of this discourse in particular.

Nor can we for a moment doubt that to both these elements in his consciousness John links the memory of that Spirit which in Genesis is seen brooding over the primeval waste of waters, that unregenerate nature, that formless chaos into which God's Breath puts life and order.*

This is no mere reading of all possible meanings into the text, nor "accommodating" it to notions true enough in themselves, yet in fact alien to the written word. It at once

* In the prologue, John deliberately models himself on Genesis.

adheres to the traditional, authoritative, and doctrinal interpretation of John's words, and also illustrates what we believe to be John's usual psychic process, abundantly attested by the whole of his Gospel, and normal, as I said, for a poet or mystic and even, in due measure, for any ordinary mind.

Often, in this Gospel, the comparison round which the discourse is built is drawn from something within the immediate range of the hearer's senses. So, in the Synoptists, the parables are quite likely based, as a rule, on something which the listeners could at the moment see and hear. So now, when Our Lord continues:

> The wind blows where it wills;
> Its voice thou hearest;
> But thou knowest not
> Whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth;
> Even so is every one who is born of the Spirit;

you may hear, if you will, the night-wind whispering round the two as they talk. Even so invisible, so mysterious in origin and in destination, but no less recognizable in its power and effects, is the New Life to be inbreathed into the natural man.

Nicodemus, disheartened, sighs: " How can

these things happen?" Jesus, too, sighs as he reproaches him: "*Thou* art 'the Master in Israel,' and thou knowest not these things?"

In solemn truth I tell thee:
What we know, we speak;
What we have seen, to that bear we witness;
And our witness accept ye not.
If things of earth I have told you,
And ye believe not,
How, if I tell you Heavenly Things,
Shall ye believe?

The Law had enjoined; the Prophets had proclaimed; the Baptist had prepared Christ's way; Nicodemus was "the Master in Israel": yet Christ's ordinary teaching had failed to win acceptance. How, then, should this supreme and central mystery of the new Faith find a hearing? That the witness of Christ was rejected, or at least misunderstood, by His "own," His elect people, was the tragedy which haunted John. Throughout the Gospel the horror of this rejection gathers in gloom and density like a thundercloud, until the Evangelist has, as it were, to incarnate the whole idea of resistance to God's Light, in the Jews—the nation who should themselves have been a light and guiding star

to the heathen. Perhaps the rousing of this emotion in his mind, or the masterful psychic effect of his declaration of this Heavenly Thing, an Eternal Life inbreathed into man's soul, causes his own personality to expand here and dominate, and absorb the discourse. At any rate, in "What we know we speak . . ." the Evangelist's habitual thought, and therefore style, begin to pierce upwards through the narrative. In "if things of earth . . ." his mind is refocused, for a moment, on the person of Christ; but very soon the Saint spreads his own eagle's wings; Nicodemus is forgotten; John soars to the place where the Word lives contemplating God, and follows the love-sped message of that Word leaping down from the Father among men, a flash of Light which the world could not tolerate nor live by, for it was in love with darkness.

What has been taught, then, so far, is this. Man, by his natural birth from his parents, is born into his natural kingdom of the earth with its natural duties, moral and religious, its natural ideals, and its proportionate natural reward. But that is not all. Henceforward,

he is to be, should he so will, reborn, supernaturally, into the supernatural kingdom too: this birth is spiritual, a grace-birth, and in baptism it is given. Here, then, is the first Heavenly Thing. A new Life has to be inbreathed into the old. Man, to fulfil Christ's aim, must be born anew, and from above.

* * * *

The revelation moves a pace forward.

Jesus is passing through Samaria, that unfriendly land where even the Hebrew worship was diluted by pagan infiltration. Exhausted by His journey, He sits down "as He was," beside an ancient well. The disciples go on into the town to buy food. A woman comes to draw water.*

Jesus said: "Give Me something to drink."

"You—a Jew—ask for drink from me—a Samaritan?"

If thou didst know
The Gift of God,
And Who it is that saith to thee
'Give Me to drink,'
Thou wouldst have asked of *Him*, and He would have given thee
A Living Water.

* Chap. ii.

Again Jesus speaks ambiguously. His word can mean both "*living* water" and "fresh," spring water. She grasps at the material alternative. Spring water? But the well is deep. He has no pitcher. Yet whence, save from the well, obtain it? Jacob made that well! Was He greater than Jacob? Whence had He His spring water? Jesus said:

Whosoever drinks of this water
Shall thirst again.
But whosoever shall drink of the water *I* will give him
Shall thirst no more for ever;
But the water that I will give him
Shall become within him a fountain of living water,
Leaping up into Eternal Life.

The woman, stupid merely, or fancying at best some magic elixir, cries: "Sir, give me this water, that I be no more thirsty, nor come here to draw!"

Jesus, to startle her (like Nathanael) into astonishment at least, shows that He reads the secrets of her life. She perceives that He is a seer, and propounds to Him a religious problem that has intrigued her: Was worship

acceptable to Yahweh, as the Samaritans taught, only on their Mount Gerizim, or, as the Jews taught, only in Jerusalem? Jesus answers her:

Woman, believe Me that the hour is coming,
When neither on this Mount (alone) nor in Jerusalem (alone)
Ye shall worship the Father. . . .
Nay, the hour cometh, and, indeed, even now is come
When the true worshipper shall worship the Father
In Spirit and in Truth.
(Yea, for such are they whom the Father seeks to worship Him.)
God *is-Spirit,*
And they that worship must worship
In Spirit and in Truth.

Like Nicodemus, the woman gives up. Ah, well, Messias is on His way: when *He* is come, *He* will explain everything.

"I am He, I, Who am speaking to you."

Here, then, a step forward has been taken. To Nicodemus, the New Life had been revealed at its insertion, its inbreathing; here it is seen as a Fountain—that is, a springing force: no mere inert thing, like a jewel in a casket; no mere passing gift, like a draught

of water that refreshes, but needs renewal. It leaps and bubbles upward into "Eternal Life." Later, too,* Jesus calls all who thirst to come and drink, no water that is dead and perishable, but which shall be a Source that flows and brims and overflows, rivers of living water for the making glad God's city. And, John says, this is the Spirit, destined to indwell Christians.†

Thus for all time the keen air of morning, the storm, the breeze among the branches, and now sources, brooks, and rivers—for all time air and water may be for us more than their mere selves, sacramentals, great elements in God's creation explained and consecrated and chosen as symbols of the Spirit.

But there is a sequel to the tale, too beautiful to be omitted here, though not strictly carrying on the same lesson. The disciples return, with food.

"Master, eat."

"I have food to eat of which you do not know."

"Can someone have brought Him food?"

* Chap. vii. 37-39.

† And in Apoc. xxii. 1, the River flowing through the City from God's Throne, is the Spirit.

My food is to do the Will of Him Who sent Me,
And to accomplish His work.
Have you not a saying:
"Four months yet, and then the harvest comes?"
Nay! *I* say to you,
Lift up your eyes and see the country-side,
Golden is it for harvesting!
Already the harvester is winning wage,
And gathering grain
Unto Eternal Life;
That he who sows and he who reaps, together may rejoice.

Therefore, the episode, unlike that with Nicodemus, ends on the note of Christ's solemn exultation. Yet an exultation penetrated by the pathos of His unspeakable unselfishness; not tragedy, yet assuredly half-sadness. As He looks forward to the glad harvests of the future, He knows that not until, and through, the death of Him Who sowed, and the deaths of so many whose blood, too, must be the Seed, shall the Divine granaries be filled.

Dare we say that with tears in His eyes, yet with the gentlest, happiest smile upon His lips, He pursues the proverb?*

* It would need a technical discussion to show that St. John means Our Lord, quite clearly, to be quoting two halves of a popular dictum.

Yes, for in *this* the saying *is* truthful—
"One man reaps where another man has sown."
I have sent you to reap whereat you have not laboured;
Others have laboured
And you have entered into their toil.

III

The second step in this mystery of the Supernatural Life is, that it is achieved by nothing less than a vital union with Our Lord Himself.

Not only does John proclaim: "He who believeth in the Son *hath Life.** . . . He who believeth in Him Who sent Me *hath* life everlasting and hath passed over from death into the Life,"† but "What has come to exist in Him, *is* Life."‡

(This is what God guarantees), that "He has given us Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son: he who hath the Son, hath Life; he who hath not the Son, hath not Life. . . .§ We know that the Son of God is come; and

* Chap. iii. 36.

† Chap. v. 24. Compare 1 John iii. 14: "We know that we have passed across out of death into the Life."

‡ Chap. i. 4.

§ 1 John v. 11.

(God) hath given us insight that we should acknowledge the True: and we *exist in* the True, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the True God and Eternal Life."*

First, Jesus has and gives the Life.

He restores the paralytic to—as we say—life, and then strives to raise the minds of the onlookers from this relatively earthly event of a miracle of physical life-giving to the diviner level. For, this physical life, however full and healthy, is but as death if it be regarded as *all;* as *excluding* that supernatural Life He means to impart.

Greater things than *these* shall be shown, that
then, indeed, ye may marvel!
For even as the Father raiseth the dead, and
maketh alive,
So the Son, too, whom He wills, Then
maketh He alive. . . .
In solemn truth I tell you:
He who heareth My Word
And believeth in Him Who sent Me,
Hath Eternal Life;
And into judgment cometh he not,
But is passed across out of the death into
the Life.
In solemn truth I tell you,
The hour is coming, nay, is now come,

* 1 John v. 20.

When the dead shall hear the voice of the
Son of God,
And they who hear shall live.
For even as the Father hath Life in
Himself,
So to the Son, too, hath He given to have
Life in Himself.*

But at the hour of the supreme miracle this declaration is complete. Lazarus dies. Jesus meets his sister.

" Hadst Thou been here, my brother had not died. Even now . . . I know that whatever Thou shalt ask of God, He will give it Thee."

" Thy brother shall rise again."

And she, still dwelling in the realm of " earthly things," the current doctrines of an ultimate *revival* of the dead, answers that she knows he shall rise again at the resurrection at the Last Day.

Then she hears from His lips the tremendous identification:

I AM
The Resurrection and the Life.
He who believeth in Me, though he die,
Shall live;
And all who live, and believe in Me,
Shall never die.†

* Chap. v. 20-26 † Chap. xi. 25, 26.

The Life is no third thing merely, given by one to another; it is the communication of Himself. "I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me."*

* * * *

Of especial value for the illustration of this truth, the identification of what the Christian has with what Christ is, is the powerful use, throughout the Gospel, of the metaphor of Light, partly because it so immediately provokes the idea of its opposite, Dark; to air and water it were hard to find an opposite, unless, perhaps, suffocation, which John does not use; and thirst, which is not strictly the opposite of water. But the "Life" is the Light of men: the Light shines in the dark, and the dark cannot imprison it.†

* The "New Name," in Apoc. ii. 17, "which no one knows" save the Risen Christ Who gives it and the victorious soul who receives it, again designates this amazing conjunction of the grace-deified self with the self of the God-made-Man. In many ancient faiths, the *name* follows and belongs to the *self*, the kernel of life: each man has a secret name, proper to his true inner self. Anyone who knows that, has absolute inner power over the owner. This new, incommunicable name implies, follows and recognizes the personal innermost communion of myself with Christ's self. Of that utterly personal fact and experience, only He and I are aware.

† Chap. i. 4-9.

I am the Light of the World
He who followeth Me
Shall never walk in the Dark,
But shall have the Light of Life.*
He who works the Truth,
Comes to the Light,†
Walk while ye *have* the Light,
That the Dark imprison you not.
He who walks in the Dark
Knows not whither he fares;
As ye have the Light, put faith in the Light,
That ye be Sons of Light.‡
I came a Light into the world,
That all who put faith in Me, remain not in the Dark.§
God is Light,
And Darkness in Him is none at all.
If then we say that we have Communion with Him, yet walk in Dark,
We lie, and we do not work the Truth.
If in the Light we walk, as He is in the Light,
Then have we communion with one another.‖

Herein is now the consecration, as of air and water, so of that light which men have always instinctively, and at times idolatrously, wor-

* Chap. viii. 12. † Chap. iii. 21. ‡ Chap. xii. 35, 36.
§ Chap. xii. 46. ‖ 1 John. i. 5-7.

shipped. And were its work no more than this, that it thus re-consecrates, re-interprets for us, re-vivifies the universe, John's Gospel would win our gratitude.

But here, before concluding our illustration of the doctrine of the Christian's unification with Christ, we must insert, as it were, a parenthesis. For, especially in this idea of light, and of its allied idea, sight, the mechanism of the appropriation of the life by the soul, the act of acceptation, is inevitably stressed; and again, as we said, light instantly evokes its antithesis, dark, in a way that air and water do not and cannot. Let us, then, think along the following line.

To live is to be: untruth is unreality: hence to live fully is to *be* truly one's *real* self. Hence Life is Truth. Moreover, the material world but half exists, if you view all the possibilities of existence. The full existence must include, and predominantly *be*, the spiritual. Hence the full Life is full Truth, and is Spirit. Hence deviation from this true, destined self is death and untruth. That is what sin is. Hence, spiritually, darkness is untruth, and that, chosen by the

soul, is sin. Hence all these associated terms: Life, Death; Spirit, World or Flesh; Truth, Lie; Light, Dark; to Walk, to Wander; Love, and Sin.

The antithesis of a Divine Light, identified with Reality and Truth, and darkness and unreality and error, was so common in contemporary mystical philosophy, that quite apart from the massive, organic place filled by the same antithesis in John's Gospel itself, we are prepared to find that it is not exhaustively, nor even primarily, to be conceived as affecting the *intellect.* It does so; but its action is subtler, and also more comprehensive, than that. What it gives is not only Truth—*i.e.*, increase of information: new knowledge of facts; but Truth—*i.e.*, increase of reality, of vitality, a whole richer way of being. A strong dynamic element is inseparable from it; an *active* quality; to accept it is an affair of doing, of walking. Throughout the Epistle and the Apocalypse, the notions of *sin and falsehood* reciprocate. That is why the rich idea of Faith, the act by which we lay hold of the Heavenly Thing revealed, must not, in the Gospel, be taken as contain-

ing only an assent to a proposition, even on God's word (though it is also that), but a total laying hold, by the entirety of the soul's vital powers, on that vital fact, that living Truth, which is Christ.

We are far from proposing to set out the complete Catholic theological treatise on Faith, illustrating it by St. John's Gospel, or on anything else. But, remaining within the limits of that Gospel, we are endeavouring to reach, and in some measure to analyze, the splendid complex contents of some of those words which express his dominant ideas, to see how they all *work in function* of one another, and of his supreme covering idea, Eternal Life.

Return, then, for a moment to that idea of light. Light (as we know it) is neither the thing seen, nor the eye that sees; yet the thing must be illuminated, and the eye responsive in itself, opened and gazing in the right direction, and unimpeded. In this mystery of Faith, Christ not only is the Thing to be seen by the soul, but is Himself the Light; so that He must first reach our soul's eye, and be admitted by it, before we can fully under-

stand Himself or His Father; and the initial solicitation of our eye to look, and all else that issues in its right behaviour, are, too, we learn, and must be, accounted for by the Divine influence, first ever in the field. Yet our eye, after all, remains *ours*. We can refuse to open it; we can turn it aside; obstacles may be interposed. Even when the Light is ours, we can refuse to look at that which it illuminates. We can make ourselves, in practice, blind; and—ultimate horror !—we can, it would seem, destroy as it were our optic nerve. Read now the miracle of sight restored to the man born blind, an "earthly thing" enough compared to the gift of Faith or spiritual Sight, granted to the soul.*

The Pharisees had derided Jesus and His claims. "Dost *thou* believe," Our Lord asks him, "in the Son of Man ?"

"Why, Who is He, Sir, that I may believe in Him ?"

"Not only hast thou seen Him, but He Who is talking with thee is He."

"I believe, Lord." And he worshipped Him.

* Chap. ix.

Unto a Separation * came I into this world,
That they who cannot see, should see,
And that they who "see" should become blind.

"Are we, too, blind, then?" ask the Pharisees who had cast out the man whom Jesus had sought and found.

If you were blind, then had you no sin;
As it is, you say: We see.
So your sin remains.†

There is, therefore, guilty unbelief. There is the man who sees nothing, because, though his eye be healthy, he has no light. But there is the man, too, who refuses to look, or even, shutting or averting his eyes, declares that there is nothing to be seen save what now he sees. There is the man who, by dint of tampering with his sight, may destroy the very power of vision. Short of a recreative miracle, his doom is sealed. It is not true, then, that all sin is, as Socrates thought, blameless ignorance. If one but knew what the good was, he argued, one would do it. Explain the ultimate *how* and *why* of evil choice we cannot. But John acknowledges

* *Cf.* p. 63. † Chap. ix. 36-41.

what our consciences speak loudly, that there is wilful error, culpable disbelief; in fact, that only such *willed* blindness deserves the name of disbelief and sin.

What mysteries are left! Why does one choose to see, another to stay sightless, though for both alike the Light is shining, and the Thing to be seen is there, and God is soliciting the gaze of each? Does He solicit them unequally? the one, insufficiently? Is the fault, somehow, with God? That were a blasphemy, not to be hinted at by John. Let us leave, for the moment, this problem. I hope, in an Appendix dealing with John's preoccupation with the *evidence* for Christ's message, to say what more may here be fitting. For the moment, leave it at this: God wishes all men to come to the knowledge of Himself, through Jesus Christ. For all men a sufficient Light, of nature and of grace, is shining. But though it can never be extinguished, it does not conquer utterly the opposing dark. There is an obstacle: the wicked will of men; the chosen rejection, made by the flesh, and by the world and Satan.

* * * *

Herein, therefore, is the clue for the interpretation of John's use of the term *world* (and though less frequently used, its departmental equivalent, *flesh*). "In the beginning, God created heaven and earth," and He saw that they were good. The Word was God, and through Him that universe was made, and apart from Him was made nothing. Therefore, again and again, the world, the totality of created things, is *good*, and in it that human nature which is termed, so often, "flesh." As such, these things are good. Yet almost always John uses these terms, "world," "flesh," as *opposed* to Spirit; as dark against light: as error against truth. That is, once more, because in the world, and in man, exists free will, and *as a fact*, that will has chosen the wrong: it has sinned, it has introduced the death. Therefore, you must regard John as considering the world and man's will precisely under that aspect, *as resisting*, as Satans, Adversaries: not as they are in themselves, beautiful and immaculate creatures of the Father. Here, then, you have no pessimism nor scorn of God's creation: no Eastern condemnation of material things

as such. That were a blasphemy and a sacrilege, to be charged to those Gnostics, truly enough, against whose nascent schools John, historically, is encamped. But still less is there, in John, any facile optimism, the self-flattery which suggests that in the long run nothing matters, that evil is not ultimately distinguished from the good in itself or its results. There are "sons of perdition," men who "die in their sins," who do *not* "remain in Him." Such a one is "cast out," like the severed vine-shoot, and is straightway "withered," and "they gather him with the rest and cast him into the fire, and he burneth."* The gentle Saint can still speak in tones of thunder, and the Apostle of love can be as stern as the inexorable Christ.

* * * *

Another very important word, often used by St. John in this connection, is the Greek *crisis* (χρίσις or χρίμα), translated in our New Testament *judgment.* Here again is one of Our Lord's "ambiguities." It can, indeed, mean "judgment," in fact, "condemnation";

* Chap. xv. 6.

but the original meaning of the word is *division*, separation. We still so use it when speaking of the *crisis* of an illness, though I expect many people then treat it as if it were the same as *climax*, and mean that the man is then at his worst. That is not so, save as implied by the fact that he has then reached the *dividing line*, when he must improve or go under. Once or twice St. John alights plainly on one or the other meaning: usually he hovers in the vicinity of both: to realize this not only enriches for us the meaning of his words, but has a definite bearing on the way in which he has to speak of Eternal Life. Besides, it solves certain puzzles.

Thus, Our Lord twice definitely states that He was not sent, nor came, to judge, but to save.* Yet, in chapter five, verse twenty-two, He declares that the Father judges no man, but has handed over all judgment to the Son; and in chapter nine, verse thirty-nine, He says, "For a *crisis* came I into the world." The fact is, that the object of Christ's coming is not "wrath" nor condemnation, but love and salvation; yet automatically

* Chap. iii. 17; xii. 47

His coming creates a segregation, a grouping; those who, by their free will helped by grace, accept Him, "hear," and "believe in" Him, and those who, as freely, and despite grace, reject Him. These are they who, if they fix themselves in their isolation, and do not even come to Him, cannot "go where He goes," but "die in their sins,"* and "rise," not to the resurrection of life, and union with God, but—John can scarcely strain the paradox and say (as symmetrically he should) to the "resurrection of death"—to that of *crisis* or separation,† of self-pronounced condemnation. Each man sends himself to hell; nay, each man is his own hell. For a man "in hell" is a man self-chosenly separated, supernaturally, from God.

Read, then, the passages where Christ alludes to judgment, testing each, first, with the translation of *crisis* by that word, or by "condemnation"; then, with the translation "separation" or "division."

God sent not the Son into the world
To judge (condemn) the world,
But that the world should be saved
Through Him.

* Chap. vii. 34; viii. 21. † Chap. v. 29.

He who believes in Him
Is not being "judged" (separated),*
But he who does not believe
Is forthwith in a state of "judgment" (separation)†
Because he does not believe.
Now this is the "judgment" (dividing),
The Light has come into the World,
And men preferred the Dark to the Light.‡

Automatically, the ill-willed shrink from the Light: they separate themselves; they cower into the dark, which, as for Judas, who goes out into it, is their appropriate and chosen place.

The Father "judges" no man,
But the whole "judgment" has He made over to the Son.
He who hears My Word,
And believes in Him who sent Me,
HATH ETERNAL LIFE,
And does not come towards "judgment,"
But is passed across from Death into Life.§

He has achieved that *Communion with the Living God* through *Christ* which *is* Life

* Because by that very act of belief, complete, vital supernatural adhesion (*cf.* p. 58), he is *united* to God. The whole idea of separation is excluded.

† Readers of Greek will value the change of tense: *οὐ κρίνεται* ; *ἤδη κέκριται.*

‡ Chap. iii. 17-19. § Chap. v. 22-24.

itself, and by very definition excludes the idea of separation, and of death, and of condemnation.

At the beginning and end of this problem is, assuredly, the inability of human language to cope with the very nature of what it here is striving to express. Eternal life partakes of the nature of eternity itself—that is, it is timeless, and exists *totum simul*, altogether and simultaneously. It knows neither before nor after. But man exists in time, and his life is measured by minutes, days, and years. Therefore, in the God-indwelt soul, eternity is—*how*, who shall say ?—mysteriously mated with time. The timeless fact is on the rack of hours, and to our seeing, dislocated. How can that be ? Well ! No philosophy can tell us, even, how the eternal God creates the world of space and parts and successions, nor how it stands in necessary relation to Him, yet not He to it: *how*, in short, Eternal and temporal can even co-exist. Yet that they do, reason assures us, and Faith repeats. Therefore, in the process of my salvation there is for me a Beginning, that is, the act of Faith, when, by my willed supernatural

adhesion to God, my Eternal Life commences; and again, there is not an End, but at least a future manifestation, and a moment when the presence or absence in me of my Eternal Life declares itself, my "judgment," my irrevocable finding of myself or *here*, or *there*, the fixing of my communion or of my separation. Yet, though *unfixedly*, I have or have not my Eternal Life *wholly now*—He who believeth *hath*. . . . He who eateth hath. . . . My judgment is *now*, and is continuous: even now, in this sense, I am in my heaven or my hell. It is no slight thing, then, to be a human creature. Eternity and Infinity are involved with us; and within our own soul John opens and reveals to us abysses above and below; the presence, or willed absence, of that Heavenly Thing; so that death brings little more than the *fixing*, and then the overflow into our total consciousness, of what is already ours.

Here, then, is this Peacemaker, in whose hand, inevitably, is a sword: here is He Who is set for the "rise, and for the fall, of many in Israel:" He, against Whom, if we be not *for* Him, we needs must stand. Hence-

forward, in this world of supernature, there is no neutrality.

But since, please God, not thus set against Christ are our wills, we may in humble hope return to read what more John has to tell us of that Communion which is our true Eternal Life.

* * * *

The incorporation of Christian with Christ is most fully stated, of course, in the two Eucharistic chapters, sixth and fifteenth, on the living Bread and the Mystic Vine.

Jesus multiplies the loaves: the crowds flock to Him, from the meanest of motives—less than mere miracle-lust; He rebukes them—because they had *fed* on the magic food, seeing in what He had done not even a sign of some spiritual truth, still less the symbol of the Heavenly Things He came to reveal.

Work not for the food which perishes,
But for the Food which endures to Eternal Life,
Which the Son of Man is offering you;
For Him the Father hath sealed,
Even God.

What are we to do, that we may work
Works of God ?

This is the Work of God—
To believe in Him Whom God hath sent.

What sign workest Thou, that we may see
And put faith in Thee?
Our ancestors did eat
The Manna in the Wilderness.
"He gave them bread from Heaven to eat."
What workest *Thou?*

In solemn truth I tell you:
Not Moses gave you the Bread from Heaven,
But My Father is giving you the Bread from Heaven,
The True Bread.
For the Bread of God
Is THAT which comes down out of Heaven,
And gives Life to the World.

Here Christ has used His favourite ambiguity. In the Greek the words can mean: The Bread of God is the Bread which comes down . . . or, is He Who comes down. Like the woman who asked for the "Water," they choose the easier alternative and petition: "Sir, give us this bread, always." He is forced into clearer speech.

I am the Bread of Life.
He who cometh unto Me
Shall never hunger:

And He who believeth in Me
Shall thirst no more at all. . . .
All that the Father giveth Me
Shall come to Me,
And him who cometh unto Me
I will in no wise cast out.
For I have come down from Heaven
Not to do My Will,
But the Will of Him Who sent Me.
Now this is the Will of Him Who sent Me.
That of all that He has given Me, I should lose nothing;
But I shall raise it up at the Last Day.
For this is the Will of the Father,
That all who see the Son and believe in Him
Should have Eternal Life,
And that I shall raise them up at the Last Day.

Remember, in the light of what we have already seen, that throughout this discourse the same doctrine of unification with Christ, the Source of True Life, is being taught, with true immortality (and not mere physical resuscitation) involved. "Coming to Him," "hearing Him," "believing in Him," all these terms are, in substance, identical in meaning; they imply that act of vital adhesion to Christ which begins, for the man in time, and, at the Last Day, will be "manifested"

in the full meaning of its reality: the actual incorporation with Christ is the timeless fact of Eternal Life, possessed *wholly* and *now*. Inception, process and consequence, are mapped out by John's human thought and ours; but in itself, the fact is timeless: the moment of man's "coming" is the moment of his immortalization. In Eternity, first and last are one: Communion cancels "judgment."

The Jews resent those words: "I am the Bread which came down from Heaven." They knew His parents. How then could He have come down from Heaven?

He rebukes their argument, even while reminding them, sadly enough, that only they whom God "draws" can come to Him, and perhaps not all of these, even, actually respond. But it remains that he who so comes has the Life, and only he. Then He resumes:

I am the Bread of Life:
Your fathers ate the Manna in the Wilderness
And died.
This is the Bread which comes down out of Heaven
That a man may eat of *that*,
And may not die.

I am the Living Bread
Which comes down out of Heaven;
If a man eat of My Bread
He shall live for ever.
And the Bread that I will give for the Life
of the world
Is My Flesh.

The Eucharist here definitely dawns.

Notice the steps by which Jesus has, so far, moved: "Believe in Me." "What are your credentials? Your heavenly guarantee, equivalent to the Manna given by Moses?" "*That* 'bread from Heaven' gave no real Life! My Father offers and sends a true Heaven-bread, which gives you *Life*. *I* am that Bread from Heaven, that Bread of Life. Come to Me: believe in Me; eat of *it*—of *Me*—and live for ever! And that Bread is My Flesh."

Now even if John had not meant to write of the Eucharist, after his whole lifetime spent in *using* that Sacrament, it could not but have come into his mind once he found himself writing down the phrases we have quoted. And if he had positively meant (as some Reformers, say, have urged) *not* to write of the Eucharist, but only, for example,

of Faith, he ought to have avoided expressions which were certain to mislead his readers. For into their minds the Eucharist would have come as infallibly as into his own. That the Eucharist is being thought of by writer and reader of this chapter is psychologically inevitable. But inadequate, too, is the idea, common in those modern non-Catholic critics who have suffered the violent reaction proper to their minds, that John *set out* to write primarily, or even exclusively, of the Eucharist; or even of Faith only, at the beginning, and of the Eucharist only, at the end.*

Once more, and I deliberately repeat myself (for the notion, though simple in itself, is hard to appropriate), the *global*

* Maldonatus, as usual, is very good on this: and by his strong insistence on the inclusiveness of St. John's meaning avoids, I think, the difficulties with which Patrizi and Wiseman, for example, have to contend, though they at least see this, that the Eucharist is not equally uppermost in John's mind throughout the chapter, and is in any case not to be regarded as an end in itself, an exhaustive climax, but in its place in a whole scheme: the supreme symbol and instrument, for the Christian, of his incorporation with Christ. Though doubtless in so far as Holy Communion *is* that incorporation, the Eucharist can be regarded even as an end. Still, our Eternal Life of Communion is to be distinguished from our recurrent Communions.

theme, as of the Gospel, so of this chapter, is vital unification with Christ. In the individual case, this begins by what Our Lord calls "coming to" Him, seeing, hearing, believing on Him, words always including an active, inmost, vital element. The Jews "came," yet that was physical approximation merely. They "looked at" the signs and "listened to" the words; yet listening, "heard not," and looking, "saw not." Why, they, like many an inquirer, may even have given in their *intellectual assent* to Christ's claims. But not yet is that faith. You will find would-be converts yielding freely to the force of an argument; owning that the "Catholic position" is by them irrefutable; still you may know clearly that not yet are they "believing"; not yet is the vital contact established. Only when *grace* "catches" the will, is Eternal Life begun. But even as a man, born into the world, requires for his growth and development a proportionate daily food, so, too, must his New Life, inaugurated at his second, spiritual birth, receive its suitable, constant food. But no food is proportionate to the Eternal Life which re-

quires maintenance and increase, save Christ Himself; no food can be merely *like* in character or in quality, to that which is in essence unique; it must be a food *identical* in kind with it: but where the Life is Christ, the food, too, must be Christ; and the Eucharist is the chiefest *way* in which Christ feeds us with *Himself;* a way having its material coefficient, for we too are body as well as soul; and administered recurrently, for we still live in time, and forget and grow tired, and change, and must be succoured in accordance with our state. When at the Last Day our soul breaks out of the limiting hours and years into its Eternal State, it will have no more need of fractional Communions, nor Sacraments given and re-given, and multiplied Masses and summoning altar-rails. Mystery unconquerable by human reasoning! Eternal Life given to and nurtured in my fluctuant body and unstable mind! Not here is any more the duty of philosophizing; but we offer to God that "heart sincere" which faith alone makes strong; and to this our victory God gives not alone that New Name which marks our new and spiritual

birth into a new reality, but that Secret Manna which shall nourish us into the perfection of the Sons of God.*

So do not impoverish the contents of John's consciousness. Only the most practised of Greek-natured wits, only the most ascetic-willed philosopher, can so concentrate upon one thought as to eliminate wholly the thoughts which are in vital association with it. That is a habit useful, at times, and in the process of inquiry: but *in vision*, you do not eliminate: you see the whole in its parts, and the parts not dissected nor scattered here and there, but as a living whole.

"How," the Jews struggle with the mystery, "can this man give us his flesh to eat?" "How can these things be?"

Like a solemn music the theme develops itself, first negative, then positive and triumphant.

In solemn truth I tell you:
If you eat not the Flesh of the Son of Man,
And do not drink His Blood,
You have no Life in you.

* Apoc. ii. 17.

He who doth eat My Flesh
And drink My Blood,
Hath Eternal Life,
And I will raise him up at the Last Day.
For My Flesh is a true Food,
And My Blood true Drink.
He who eateth My Flesh
And drinketh My Blood,
Abideth in Me
And I in him.
Even as He sent Me—the Living Father—
So he who eateth Me,
He too shall live by Me.
This is the Bread which came down out of Heaven.
Not as the fathers ate,
And died:
He who eateth *this* bread
Shall live for ever.

It is the Spirit, He concludes, which *makes alive:* supernatural union with Christ does not destroy the world it conquers, nor slay the flesh it ensouls: without it, "world" and "flesh" are dead, indeed; but with it, true life indwells that flesh which the Word became, so that by that Presence, and by It alone, we find eternal "profit."

In the allegory of the Vine, Jesus, though more shortly, teaches the same doctrine of incorporation, and with more emphasis, as,

indeed, the occasion suggested, upon the Love which that union implies. The act by which Christian is joined to Christ is *fully* human as well as divine; it is not *merely* a reasoned choice, no utilitarian decision only, by which the soul grows into and remains in Him. Even in our earthly histories, what unification is so strong and so transfiguring as that which comes through love? In the Stem, therefore, the vineshoots dwell: separation from it is death to the shoot, and, indeed, diminution, though not death, for the Stem: union means the glad springing upwards of one sap through Stem and shoots and tendrils, bearing rich clusters of grapes whose wine makes glad not the heart of man alone, but of God.

Of this indwelling and embracing Love more will be said when the great discourse of the Supper Room is reached.

IV

Jesus can only assure to us this unique relation to Himself because of His own unique relation to the Father. He can only give us this special Life because He has it; and

He has it, because He *is* it; and He is it, because of that mysterious Identity which is co-existent with that mysterious Otherness to be asserted of Himself and the Father, Source of all existence. This is a third (yet organically connected) "directive idea" in John's Gospel. It is no doubt the object of his intuitions rather than of his reasonings; he exclaims, not argues; asserts, not proves; adores, not analyzes. He furnishes materials for theologians yet unborn; he supplies them with all, perhaps, that they will ever need; he gives them phrases which they will allot to that Divine Nature or that Human Nature to which they may be severally appropriate; no part, perhaps, of the treatises on Trinity and Incarnation but may be built up, forthwith, by the aid of John's words.

But albeit the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ be in his pages at once astonishingly complete and clear, although unmarshalled into order, yet it remains that John's eyes are fixed throughout upon a Person; Mystery is for him irrevocably Incarnate: "That which we have seen with our eyes—which our hands have handled. . . ." Doubtless

this Person is That "which existed from the beginning, which was along with God, and Itself was 'God.'"* But this abstract, disincarnate view will not continue; the Word becomes Flesh and pitches His tent among us; and henceforward John keeps his eyes fixed on *Jesus*, and will not "divide" Christ, even in thought.

* * * *

Though Nathanael, in a single sentence, will call Our Lord "Rabbi" and "Son of God," and as climax "King of Israel,"† yet John assuredly uses the title—Son of God—as a unique and unshared and, indeed, incommunicable predicate. True, we are all to be, by grace, God's children; yet Jesus is the Sole-Begotten. None has ascended into

* It is impossible to render in English the nuance expressed by the presence, then absence, of the article in the phrases ἦν παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ and ἦν Θεός. It goes beyond "He stood beside the King and himself was royal." For this suggests a royalty diluted by participation; or again, "He stood beside the Emperor, and himself was Emperor;" for that implies that in this case there were at any rate two Emperors. ὁ Θεός, "God," refers to God as the Ultimate, Undivided Source of all that is: Θεός without the article, to the Nature and Substance of God, identical in the Word, and in the Father who begets Him.

† John i. 49.

Heaven, to detect and reveal God's secret; but one, and one only, can proclaim it, for He knows it necessarily, His existence being in Heaven, whence He has descended.*

God no man has seen ever:
The Sole-Begotten Son
Who exists in the heart of the Father,
His is the Revelation.†

And this descent is as voluntary as that further descent into physical death, which the Incarnate Word foresaw.

I came forth from God,
And here am I;
I came not from Myself,
But He sent Me.‡
I came forth from the Father,
And I came into the World:
Now I am leaving the world,
And I fare forth to the Father.§
I lay down My life for the Sheep . . .
I lay down My life
That I may take it again. . . .
No man snatcheth it from Me,
But I lay it down of Myself.
Freedom have I to lay it down,
And freedom to take it up once more.‖

* John iii. 13, 16, 18. † John i. 18.
‡ John viii. 42; *cf.* vi. 38-42; xvii. 8.
§ John xvi. 28; *cf.* vi. 63. ‖ John x. 15-18.

All this shows that the assertion that He is *sent* by the Father * marks no ultimate subordination of nature or of rôle, but that *in Him*, thus *sent*, the Father *comes;* and if He insists, that He came not to do His own Will, but His Father's,† this marks, in these contexts, not divergence or opposition of Wills, but their perfect concurrence. Indeed, we observe here a mysterious circle of causality and consequence. The Father loves the Son *because* that Son does ever what is pleasing to Him: again, it is because the Father loves the Son that He reveals Himself to Him, so that the Son sees all that the Father does, and Himself can do it, and nothing else.‡ This mysterious reciprocity of knowledge,

* John iii. 17, 34; v. 36, 37; vi. 58; vii. 28; viii. 26-29; xii. 44, 49; xiii. 20; xvi. 5; xvii. 3, 18.

† John vi. 38, 39; *cf.* vii. 17; and the doctrine of the Father's *command*, especially xii. 49, 50; xv. 10. There is, too, a Hebraism latent here. In Hebrew, a denial followed by an affirmation, "Not this (but) that," constantly implies, "Not *only* this, but that . . ." or, "Not this, *as opposed* to that."

‡ John v. 17-20. The argument here is: "Trust Me that what I do is right. The Father loves Me, and there are no secrets between Us. And I love Him; therefore My action reproduces His, for all my Contemplation is of His Activity, which is Himself." John viii. 29.

action, and love recalls that "aërolite fallen from the skies of John" to be read in St. Matthew, chapter eleven, verse twenty-seven. "No one fully knoweth the Son but the Father; and no one fully knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall will to reveal Him."*

Already such a reciprocity leads up to the conviction of a certain unity of existence, co-natural and communicated.

Thus it is that the Father substitutes the Son for Himself—and recall how in the Apocalypse, chapter i. 13 *sqq.*, the Old Testament symbols proper to the vision of God as the "Ancient of Days" are transferred by the Seer to that of the Risen Jesus—an audacity incredible were it not due to the inspired knowledge of the truth. Thus, the Father has given over all things into the Son's hands.† The Father reveals Himself fully to the Son, and pours into Him that full power over life and death which flows from and implies essential, intrinsic identity of being with that which is the very Source of life and Life

* *Cf.* John x. 15. † John iii. 35.

itself.* He who received the Christ receives the God who sent Him.†

Hence it is that the Jews with horror, the disciples slowly yet at the last with joy, realize that He is making Himself equal to God,‡ nay, *God*, and perceive that they who do not know the Son dare not claim that they know the Father either.§ And thus, although the Father, the Immortal Source of Life, be greater than That which is to "fall

* John v. 21, 23, 26. † John xiii. 20.

‡ John v. 18; x. 33; xvi. 30.

§ John viii. 19; xiv. 10. *Cf.* 1 John ii. 23, 24. "He who denies the Son, hath not the Father: he who acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father too." Notice: Thus far it is only from the general swing of the argument that the nature of the identity between Father and Son must be inferred. "For He who heareth (and receiveth) you, heareth and receiveth Me, and he who receiveth Me, receiveth Him Who sent Me," was said to the Apostles, who were but Christ's representatives. But it is clear that Christ means more than that He is God's representative, to be received *as though He were God*. Similarly to make one's self "equal to God" (v. 18) need not mean more in itself than to claim equality of treatment with God, like Phil. ii. 6, τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ. But of course equality of treatment with God can, in good metaphysic, be claimed rightly only by one who is equal to God. But there cannot be more than one Infinite. Therefore to be equal to God is to be God. John, however, was not even as much Hellenized as were the Jews of Alexandria; and such an argument as the above is quite un-Hebrew, and is Hellenic purely

into the earth and die,"* yet are the Son and the Father ONE THING.† Before Abraham came into being, I AM;‡ "He who beholdeth Me, beholdeth Him Who sent Me;"§ "Philip, he who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father."‖

Happily, may we not think this vision of the supreme divine fact is most clearly set forth just when the human pathos of the Gospel gathers to its climax? Doubtless, the midnight dialogue with the Sanhedrist, the cool pause from the dusty roads by the ancient well, are moving and intimate scenes. Yet the noise and wrangling of the Temple courts, the grumbled questions at Capharnaum, interrupting the mysterious and majestic

* John xii. 24.
† John x. 38; xiv. 20.
‡ John viii. 58.
§ John xii. 45.
‖ John xiv. 9. It is because Jesus never says anything of this sort about Christians, even when He prays that they may be with Him and the Father *one thing* even as He and the Father are *One Thing*, and however intimate be the substantial union set up by grace, that there should be no danger of any Pantheism or heterodox Monism being based upon His words. It would be the extreme of false psychology to imagine that Pantheism could have entered in any way into St. John's mental outlook. However closely united be the Christian, through Christ, to God, forever is he *not* God, and never shall creature be confused with, merged in, or a mode of, the Creator.

promises, seem to take some of the tenderness from the Divine Voice, and to infuse an all but bitterness into its inevitable grief. Sadness, indeed, is there in the quiet Supper room, and none can enter it without feeling, even after the exit of the traitor, the imminence of the Cross; yet all the elements of human heartbreak, of desolation and of death, revolve on a secondary plane: the attention of Speaker and of hearer and of reader grows focused on that supreme Love which knits into one whole the Most High God and these His "little ones," "His own," "His friends," "His chosen," and "called" and "children" and "His flock," because in that Highest, as in those lowest, lives the Christ; and again, in the Christ Highest and lowest meet. Angels "ascend and descend" upon Him Who is above all the heavens, and yet has been made, for a little, lower than are they.

From the beginning of the Gospel, John has reminded us that some men will reject their salvation, and refuse to come to and hear their Saviour; but never once has the Saving Death itself been spoken of in accents of gloom and tragedy.

Even as Moses, in the desert, placed the bronze serpent high upon its pole, that the dying Israelites might look towards it and might live, so was the Son of Man to be uplifted, unto *life;** what if His throne of exaltation were the Cross? "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to Myself." What though the hostility of priest and erudite and politician gather itself against Him, till the whole people seem to have become reprobate? "Look," they exclaim, "the world has gone after Him."† What though the cynical false patriot declare that it will *pay* if one man be murdered, but the nation saved? By the radiating power of that death, the destined race of the Children of God should be gathered from all distances of space and time.‡ Already to the Greek-named Philip come the Greeks. "Sir, we would see Jesus;" and He exults, seeing the hour of glorification at hand, precisely through that interval of death and dark. "Unless the Grain of Wheat fall into the earth and die, it remaineth alone by itself; but if it die,

* John iii. 14. † John xii. 19.
‡ John xi. 49-52.

it beareth much fruit."* This Evangelist, who omits the picture of the Agony, and the "Angel strengthening Him," does not fear to set before us this scene of the troubling of Christ's soul, for the sake of the Heavenly Witness, the Voice of God, which attested the triumph, through death, of the Eternal Son.†

* * * *

With chapter thirteen, then, begins the second half of St. John's Gospel, to which he sets, at once as transition and as preface, the short sentence which includes a whole theology of Christ and God, and Christ and Man: "Jesus, knowing that His hour was come for passing over from this world unto the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, to the uttermost loved He them."

He rose, bowed Himself, washed their feet, made Himself servant of all, and taught that no disdain must check, no condescension disfigure, our duty of utmost service to our fellows. Seeing Him thus humbled, and enjoining humility, consider what He says:

* John xii. 24, 25. † John xii. 27.

He who receiveth him whom I send,
Receiveth Me:
And He who receiveth Me,
Receiveth Him Who sent Me.*

Already had He declared that His works were argument enough that "in Me the Father is, and I in the Father,"† but "*Now*," He cries, speaking with exultant freedom once the only real enemy is gone forth—"*Now* is God glorified in His Son; and if, indeed, God be glorified in Him, Him too shall God glorify in Himself, and straightway shall He glorify Him."‡ Already the Father speaks in Him and works in Him, and to see the One is to see the Other also,§ and thus these "little children," who have "kept" His words and so have received into them the new substantial Life—Thy Word is Truth, Thy Word is Life ‖—are knit up into the same unity.¶

"In that day," He affirms, "you shall realize that I am in the Father, and you in Me, and I in you."** To His beloved He

* John xiii. 20
† John x. 38; *cf.* xiv. 11
‡ John xiii. 31.
§ John xiv. 9-11.
‖ John xvii. 17; vi. 63.
¶ Compare 1 John ii. 24, 25, 27, 28; iii. 24; iv. 13-16.
** John xiv. 20.

repeats that "We will come to him and make our abode with him."* "Trust in God! Trust too in Me."† Many are the tarrying-places in that world which has already become God's home; as many as are the hearts which, full of grace, are by that very fact God-indwelt. He has no need to *go* to prepare them any further "mansion." Each heart dwells in the other. "Master, where abidest Thou?" "I in thee; and thou, beloved, in Me."

For if Jesus is the Way, He is also Truth and Life, that is, the Goal. We need no more than Him. Once *in Him*, we *are* where we would reach. On the day when His glorification is accomplished, and Christ be revealedly "all in all," "ye shall recognize that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."‡ That Coming of which He speaks, when we shall know how They "abide" in us, is, once more, but the revelation of that Real Presence which is already here. Meanwhile, an interspace, during which the Spirit of Truth, inhabiting us, must teach us to appreciate

* John xiv. 23. † John. xiv. 1.
‡ John xiv. 20.

more deeply and possess more chosenly that Fact which is ours, and which is He.*

But it were time ill spent to analyze these chapters: they are the seamless robe in which are clothed these final hours of intercourse: in them is repeated every element in that wonderful theology which John has stated and restated in the first part of his Gospel, and each may be remembered here, but as one sees a well-loved countryside from a hill-top in the sunset, details fused in the glow, hard edges softened, crudities transfigured beneath the splendid rays. Love is the beginning and the cause of salvation's process; Love the explanation of each path taken, each halting place; and triumphant, purified, unitive Love, the end. Yet no soft love; no compromise, no complaisant indulgence: if the world hated Him, them, too, will it hate, them will it slay;† but for all that, is there one sentence here not all encouragement; not justifying His declaration that theirs is to be joy, and joy fulfilled, a joy that none can take from them ?‡ His very death means joy, and is His glory.

† John xiv 17, 26; xvi. 13. † John xv. 18; xvi. 2.
‡ John xvi. 22-24.

Father, the hour is come.
Glorify Thou the Son
That the Son may glorify Thee;
Thou hast given Him power over all flesh,
That all whom Thou hast given to Him, to them He may give
Eternal Life.
(And this is the Eternal Life:
To know Thee,
The only True God,
And Him Whom Thou hast sent,
Jesus Christ.)
I did glorify Thee upon the earth
Having accomplished the work Thou hast given Me to do.
And now, glorify Thou Me, Father, at Thy side,
With the glory which I had, before the world began, with Thee.
I did manifest Thy Name
Unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world.
For Thee they were, and to Me Thou gavest them,
And Thy Word have they kept,
And now they have understood that all Thou hast given Me
Is from Thee . . .
I pray for them,
For they are Thine,
And all Mine are Thine, and Thine Mine,
And I have been glorified in them . . .
Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name
Whom Thou gavest to Me,

That they may be one thing,
As we are.
Not for them alone do I ask,
But also for them who shall believe through their word
On Me,
That all they may be One Thing,
Even as Thou, Father, art in Me,
And I in Thee,
That so they too may be in Us . . .
And I, the glory Thou hast given to Me
Have I given to them,
That they may be One Thing,
As We are One Thing,
I in them
And Thou in Me,
That they may be made perfect into One,
That the world may realize that it is Thou
Who hast sent Me,
And hast loved them even as Thou hast loved Me.
Father, what Thou hast given Me
(Even to be with Thee),
That *will* I, that where *I* am
They too may be with Me,
And that they may contemplate My glory
That Thou hast given Me because Thou lovedst Me,
Before the world's foundation . . .
I have made known to them Thy Name,
And will make it known,
That the Love wherewith Thou lovedst Me
May be in them,
And I in them.*

* John xvii.

III

THE CONSUMMATION

" Verbum supernum prodiens,
Nec Patris linquens dexteram,
Ad opus suum exiens
Venit ad vitæ vesperam.

" Se nascens dedit socium,
Convescens in edulium,
Se moriens in pretium,
Se regnans dat in præmium."

From the Supper Room Jesus passed to Gethsemane. John knows well enough that henceforward the Passion must be allowed to tell itself. Rarely enough will his turn of phrase or special choice of thought differentiate the narrative. Yet even so, how other are these pages, in some subtle way, from what the Synoptists had written.*

* Though, as I said, this is no critical commentary, it may interest readers, and help them in their comparison of St. John with the other Gospels, to follow Calmes's ordering of the verses of chap. xviii. and to read them thus: 1-13, 24, 14, 15, 19-23, 16-18 (25a), 25b,-27. So, almost,

From the garden, Jesus goes before the representatives of the Jewish Church; they question Him; He reminds them that they have nothing new to hear from Him: He has no secret doctrine. Jerusalem rejects Him. He moves before Rome's tribunal. He declares that He came, and was sent, to bear witness to the Truth. "What is 'Truth'?" asks the tired, contemptuous official; Imperial Rome, like theocratic Sion, is not "of the Truth," and cannot "hear" Him. Yet, by the irreversible title of the Cross, Rome placards Jesus as the Hebrews' King.

Scourged, stripped, and nailed to the Cross, He waits in the darkness. To the soldiers

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Cornely. Manuscript authority itself shows that a confusion of the text is here probable. Partly, no doubt, the difference between the spirit of passages almost identical in John and in the Synoptists, is felt by our knowing, by now, with what brooding significance John charges certain words—like *seek*, *send*, *remain*. Hence, what is not the irony, in St John, of a dialogue like: "Whom *seek* ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth." "I *am* He." Remember the affirmations to which the Samaritaness or the man born blind gave occasion. Remember Christ's repeated declaration: I AM. Such an irony, too, is well-discernible when, *e.g.*, Nicodemus says: "We know thou art come from God to be a Teacher. . . ." And you reflect, the while, on what John means when he says "we know," or speaks of the Sending, or Coming, of the Son.

His clothes are abandoned; to John, Mary is entrusted. Law is obeyed, Prophecy fulfilled; the World's Mystery is consummated. He bows His Head, and gives His soul to God.

In the Apocalypse John had written of a Scroll, inscribed, so overflowing were its contents, on front and back alike, and sealed with Seven Seals that none were wise or powerful enough to break, that so its secret should be read. All heaven and earth and hell are challenged, and in none of them was one found worthy. Only the Lamb that was slain, and though slain, stands and lives, was able to break the Seals and read the Scroll and interpret it. Upon the Cross, Christ had put the last word to that tremendous story; so was it "consummated," brought to its full perfection. And forthwith Christ unseals, and unrolls, and tells its meaning, for its meaning is Himself; Himself, *dux vitæ mortuus,* Life's Captain dead, and yet alive and conqueror. For from His dead side water and blood flow forth, water for cleansing, blood for giving Life; healing for the past, vital promise for the future; baptism, absolu-

tion, Eucharist; the Church, sprung from His very Heart.

They bury Him, and in the Easter dawn He rises. John and Peter visit the sepulchre; to Mary, in the garden of Resurrection, He reveals Himself by the sole speaking of her name; Thomas doubts no more; the Holy Ghost is given. Christ hands over His Shepherdhood in its entirety to Peter; the Church's net sweeps in its happy multitudes. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" says Jesus of His beloved; and the mistaken legend to which the words gave rise is gently corrected by the author. Not Mary, and not John had to wait anxiously for that destined apparition of Messias; no, nor even anxiously for bodily death, delayed or swift: in their hearts His Coming was accomplished, and they in Him and He in them lived, as He had willed, in perfect love and Presence.

Thus, as it were by fragments stitched together, halting somewhat, unable to conclude by literary climax or artistic device such as should satisfy the worldlier spirits who might read it, the Fourth Gospel finishes

rather than ends. The Forty Days of Resurrection had nothing of an End about them. Christ was not gone and done with: in His undying Church He lives, and she in Him.

Thus it will be seen that John, by finishing after this fashion, has once more altered the atmosphere of his vision. When the Passion begins, the great theological presentments, rising into ecstasy, of the first part of his Gospel are over. The eagle is no more gazing into the very eye of the sun. The tingling air of heaven, dazzling and crystalline above earth's rocks and marshes, is no more what he breathes. In the Passion chapters the eagle comes home, as it were, to rest; it too, after all, is a thing of feathers, and warm sleep, and brooding affection. In its home it heaps itself, forgetting nothing of the glories and the height, yet content with folded wing and hooded eye. Almost, John carries through, in his Gospel, the career of the great ecstatics, who, as the loyal years are lived, become calmer, as it were, and at home in their Heaven-on-earth; a glow follows the flashing intuitions; they watch steadily, in the golden

light, what the recurrent lightning flash had shown. So in these Passion chapters, the Saint rests his head upon the Heart of Christ; his eyes are closed; his thought is at rest; just the undying memory of those hours of love suffice him. The peace of Calvary is his; and Jesus, dying and risen, has become all Heaven and earth to him. Why, even in human love, one person can, at times, absorb the world and self. Yet not for that is world or self annihilated: the world is re-read, regained, reprized, in the light of its relation to the loved one. Self is re-created, reduplicated, at last made worthy and great, because identified with the only life worth loving. And if it be true that it is hard to love passionately without, in certain hours at least, some self-loss, or world-loss, or disregard of what is not the only true beloved, not so is the love of soul and Christ. Source of the "more abundant life" is He; and though John became more wholly Christ's than ever I can be my friend's, yet assuredly he lost nothing that was *John;* few personalities, after all these centuries, make themselves more separately felt than his; we should

be weaker friends with John, were John less wholly friend with Jesus.

Therefore, we need have no fear to pass from the history of Christ to that of the Church. One love links the two. The same spirit is alive in that pathetic First Epistle in which the old age of the Apostle is so discernible. Its repetitions, its lapses of continuous thought, its anxieties, its austerities, who would dare to criticize any of this, or to resent it? Who, sitting among the aged Saint's disciples, would be less than content to listen to his faltering phrases, and to rest, in their turn, in the warm encompassment of his love? And weak though his body be, and hesitating his sentences, who but will recognize at once the spiritual strength within them? Why, even this Epistle has been fruitful in words and expressions that no literature since has forgotten. There is here, interiorly, no *collapse* of thought and will; indeed, the sternness is, if anything, accentuated; the Church's enemies are held well in view and are most terribly rebuked; the wickedness of the world is remorselessly denounced. Yet in all alike, yes, even in

controversy, the soul of love is there, forbidding even that controversy to be limiting and deadening.

The Church is, in the beautiful phrase of an early writer, the Beloved: no invertebrate is she; no shifting wraith of a mood, or way of local life, or phase of thought. *Christ* is in His Christians; and the full Christ is Christ and Christian too.. Only sin, fixed and made permanent by will, can separate us. Sins! who has no sins? Were we to say we have none, "the truth were not in us"; nay, Himself we should make a liar; His "Word," His explanations of human history were, again, "not in us." But once we confess our sin, and come, and come back, to the Source of that Life which annuls death, not only the past is transformed, but the future is assured. Our death will die out of us, through His death which never could destroy His Life, but is our Life, our Intercession and Propitiation, and that of the whole universe.* By such men, and in them, His Word and Plan (which are Himself) are "kept," and in such the Love of God reaches its comple-

* 1 John i. 8-10; ii. 12.

tion. Hereby we know that "in Him we exist."* No new thing, assuredly, is this Love, but existing, in part revealed, and enjoined, since the beginning; and yet, new; for the Triumph of the Light is gradual, and only by degrees the world's darkness dwindles.† By degrees the world ceases to be "world," founded upon evil, and source of lust of flesh and lust of eye and flaunting boast of "life," once the true love and life reveal to the newborn Christian what the Father is, and how the past is pardoned; and to the growing Christian how to conquer what in him still is hostile to the Divine life which now is his; and to the grown men among the faithful, prolific in their turn of sons of God, how to understand Him Who was from the Beginning and endures in Eternity.‡ *That* world is passing away, an unsubstantial mirage, in comparison to him who, identified by grace and choice with God, endures, he too, eternally.§

* 1 John ii. 5. † 1 John ii. 7, 8.

‡ 1 John ii. 12-16.

§ 1 John ii. 17. When John speaks of the Eternal Life, he uses the word ζωή: when the transitory, human life of years and "natural" tendency, the word βίος.

Still, once more, not yet is the consummation. The Eternal is mated with Time, but not yet are the two one perfect Sacrament. The world's history traces its upward course, but by the road of a spiral, and a *tilted* spiral, so that even as it progresses, a point in its progress may, at a given moment, be *lower* than what it had reached a while ago. Already, before the last Apostle died, not only was the whole world not conquered, but of those who seemed, indeed, to be Christ's Christians, some had fallen away, and some, from His friends, had become His open enemies. Heresies already were sprung up: and John never will admit but that at the root of the perverse new theories was *ill will. Good faith* in error seemed to his mind unthinkable. To have tasted *Christ*, then to reject Him—how should that not be sin? Therefore, he views with horror those who "divide" Christ, refusing to acknowledge the *one Person*, God and Man, but either assert that He is Man in seeming only, or God only by some adoption or, as it were, by courtesy, a divine spirit having settled on or enveloped the Son of Mary, a "Christ" merely

inhabiting, or "using" Jesus. Such men, John cries, are anti-Christs: many such have already come into being. They went out of the Christian flock . . . had they, in truth, ever been of it? he asks, struggling with the fearful problem of *loss* of grace: how shall Divine Life *die?* Never called, no wonder if a man "come" not. But called, responsive, supernaturalized, and *then* a soul-suicide, how shall that happen?

More willingly John turns to contemplate the faithful, those on whom the Anointing of the Holy One remains; it remaining, they too remain. For that Anointing is the Spirit, and its Indwelling makes of Christians, in their mysterious measure, Christ. That grace of the Indwelling Spirit teaches them better than by argument—though, to the obedient mind, musing reason can do no harm—that Christ is true Son of God. He who denies that, *is* anti-Christ; is Satan-seed; is forthwith gone out into that Dark which swallowed up the traitor.

For, to the very end, the grave parallel seems firm. "I in them, and they in Me:" and, those in whom the "world" *abides*, and who have never fully, therefore, ceased to

"abide" in this world. To the Christian's mind are given "Heavenly Things" for knowledge: these the world cannot understand, and therefore neither can it understand the Christian.* Indeed, when a Christian lives by grace, what of that Mystery, that fourth dimensional existence, *can* be given to the world's ungraced vision? Not even to such a Christian is the *manifestation* of that grace-life given. Not yet we *see* God as He is, and not yet (we dare to say) can we *see* ourselves as we are. By *faith* we hold to the Eternal Life whose Tent we are. Indeed, what we do see, and what the world, alas! still sees, is the faultiness of our natural life, for do not our hearts still condemn us? The Spirit is with and in us, but not yet wholly obedient are we to Him. And if, indeed, our hearts condemn us, what then are we to do? How shall self chasten self? Trust to the initiative of grace! the spontaneous activity of the Spirit! Mean are our hearts and faulty; but "God is greater than our hearts." "Greater is He Who is in you than he who is in the world."†

* 1 John iii. 1. † 1 John iii. 19-20.

"Therefore, Beloved, let us love one another, for Love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God. He who does not love, never knew God, for God *is* Love. Herein has the Love of God been revealed amongst us, that His Son, His Sole Begotten, did God send forth into the world, that we might live, through Him. In *this* is the Love—not that we loved God, but that Himself loved us, and sent His Son, a Propitiation for our sins.

"Beloved, if so God loved us, we too *owe* to love one another. True, God no one hath ever *seen;* but if we love one another, God remains in us, and His Love is brought to completeness in us. . . .

"God is Love, and he who remains in the Love, remains in God, and God remains in him."*

* * * *

After John's "words of heaven," were not any comment of ours an intolerable impertinence and vulgarity? I will do little more than tabulate the doctrine we have already watched unfolded in his Gospel.

* 1 John iv. 7-16

In Eternity, *God* exists: God the Invisible, of a Nature which no other nature, created or imaginable, can comprehend. Yet this God has uttered Himself—adequately, in that mysterious Word which both is He, and is other than He, which co-exists with Him in His Eternity and through Whom all else is made. For God, through the Word, has created a finite universe; it, too, is His limited, inadequate expression; scattered, stammered syllables of His perfect self-utterance. Into this world, too, is ever streaming that Light which is suited to world minds, reflections and gleams of that Inaccessible Light in which He is, and which is He; a Light sufficient for human thought to know what it needs of God; more than sufficient, in itself, yet proportionate on the plane of nature, to the mind's exigencies.

But to this Word men remained often deaf; and to the Light, half blind.

Therefore, the Eternal Word and the Immortal Light became a man like them, that not thought alone might struggle its way to God, but that human eyes might see, human ears hear, and men's weak hands might handle the Divine.

True God, One Thing with the Father, and true Man, born of a woman, subject to hunger and thirst, weariness of body and stress of soul, a heart for friendship and for sorrow, a Man destined to die in the extreme of suffering and contempt.

But by no means only to preach a doctrine and to set a fair example did Jesus Christ thus enter human history. True, thoughts were henceforward to be in man's mind which were not there before; a manner of life should now be his of which, hitherto, he had been incapable. But both creed and code should be but the expression, in the areas of wit and will, of a New Life which, through Jesus Christ, was henceforth to be personally appropriated by humankind.

A New Life, transcending that of mind as essentially as mind transcends mere sense, was to be inbreathed by a new Creation into the soul. Man must be born anew, and from above. Baptism is the Sacrament, the mysterious transaction, part physical, part spiritual, which, it was covenanted, should cause, in man, this new Birth. But the life should not remain inert. Forthwith, like a living

Fountain, it should spring from its inmost spiritual recess, and flood its way through all man, transmuting him. And its condign food must it have; a food in no way inferior to itself; a food which should be Christ Himself, given, pre-eminently, in the Supreme Sacrament, the Eucharist.

For, after all, what is this Life? A new, real, substantial communication, so far as human nature can receive it, of that Fulness of Uncreated Life which is in God, and reaches men through Christ. Not that we can become what Christ is, nor what God is. Not that we shall ever be, or can be called, *God.* Yet neither can human thought exhaust, nor the words which alone express it fully state, that which by participation in this Life we *are,* and which, at the consummation of all things, shall not only invisibly *be,* but shall be revealed and manifested.

Such a man, therefore, has in him an Eternal Fact, and, while for *his* natural coefficient, so to say, there is a future date at which he shall be raised from death, and "judged," and glorified, yet, from the standpoint of the Eternal Life already his, he *is*

" separated " from that which alone separates, evil will, world, flesh, viewed as rejecting God's new Gift; he *is* in Communion; he is in heaven, in Christ, in God, one with Them, as They are with one another.

Yet John guards sternly the enraptured soul from that false liberty which such joy in possession might suggest to its reasoning. The dark, the flesh, the world, the lie, sin, exist; our initial act of rejection has to be continued; nay, we must *die* to them, painfully, as He died, and die all through our lives, for the sake of the Eternal Life, which though it includes all reality, and enriches every other life, yet exacts the slaying of those selfish attachments which exist in every will to the lower forms of life. Not all have that courage: not all " come," in the first instance. In some the element of response seems not to exist at all; in all it does exist, but in some it is, at the outset, stifled. Others, indeed, respond: they come, they hear; but—a terrible mystery—they change; they do not " remain " in Him; they are shoots cut off from the Vine stem, and wither, and burn; they are anti-Christ.

But those who remain in Christ remain, necessarily, in one another; and in the visible Church they form the expression of that common inner Life, in a triumphant, mutual Love.

Do not think that St. John is alone in proclaiming this mystery. It is the essence of our Faith. St. Peter, too, speaks of the "Divine power unto Life" given to us that we might "become sharers in a Divine nature";* and St. Paul recurs again and again to the doctrine of the vital union between Christ and His Church, He the Head, she the members, each incomplete and in truth unintelligible without the other; and of how this mystic Christ is, indeed, still adequately to be built up, in the uncharted future, into His perfect self, and of how human marriage, in which two become one flesh, is but the shadow of that supreme espousal; and how in God and man and universe one Spirit dwells, "straining" upwards towards the full revelation of the Sons of God.†

* 2 Peter i. 3, 4.

† See especially Eph. i. 10-22, 23; ii. 13-22; iii. 19; iv. 8-16; Col. i. 16-20, 24-28; ii. 6-15, 16-19; iii. 11. And 1 Cor. iii. 9-11, 16-17; vi. 15-20; xii. 12-21; 2 Cor. v. 17; and Romans viii. 16, 18-22, 23-27.

It was of this that the Greek Fathers, too little read and known, used a language almost too rapturous for modern ears: how God became man, that men might become gods; how the Eucharist is the very Medicine that makes Immortal. For this, too, the Liturgy prays daily, when the priest mingles at Mass the wine and water, and reminds the Father how His Creation of the world was wonderful, but its re-Creation yet more wonderful, and asks that we may be worthy " to be partakers in His Divinity, Who in our humanity did not disdain to share."

And of this Catholic philosophy and theology, ever more perfected across the ages, have taught. There are *kinds* of life, they tell us: the stone does not live; the rose, at least, can live; but the lion, more richly and fully than the rose; and than the lion, the thinking man; so that while the rose, by culture, can become a perfect *rose*, yet may it never be developed into a thing of animal life; nor the animal of mere instinct into humanity. Even so, above all these natural modes of life remains a supernatural life, which man, left to himself, could never claim

nor earn, nor into which in any way could he *raise himself;* but God gives it to him, freely, as a " grace," if he will but accept it.

This supernatural life He did, indeed, already give to our first parents: but conditionally. They held it, provided they proved obedient to His command. They disobeyed, and lost it. That is the Fall. But Adam was regarded not *isolatedly,* but as head of the race, and as forming a solid unity with his descendants. Therefore they, in him, lost that Supernature, and were born on their co-natural level merely—in " Original Sin." " In Adam all died."

But not irretrievable was the fault. A Second Adam was to come into the world: a new Head to a new race; a " new creation." He should be, in a higher sense than Adam, God's Son; true God, albeit true man. By incorporation with Him, mankind should recover its superhumanity, with its capacity for a superhuman vision and joy of God. This substantial union, on earth, is given the name of " sanctifying grace"; hereafter, it is glory. Glory is the flower and fruit of that germ: we *are* what we shall be; but what we

shall be has not yet been made manifest. This grace is, by covenant, given in Baptism, and is increased by every willed unification of the soul with the Source of grace, pre-eminently through those Sacraments which symbolize, convey, and cause it; and of these, the chief is the Eucharistic Communion. By grave sin, this grace is lost: its final loss is hell; its triumph, heaven.

Yet need a man not fear. Though his act of faith, by which he yields consent to God's revelation, is free, and his acts of love, whereby he adheres in will to God's command, are free, yet initial act and even further act of persevering choice are alike preceded and assisted by God's own act, His summoning and supporting grace, so that throughout, the process of salvation is, indeed, man's, but yet more truly God's. The two wills intertwine; better, interpenetrate. As to each "how" in all this mystery, *how* each of these things can be, *how* the new creation is accomplished so that man receives thus a divine life, and yet becomes not God, *how* by no metaphor he enters into this transcendent relation with the ever-inviolate Absolute—

well, even the law of the first Creation outstrips our comprehension: enough we know, through God's good guidance of our thought, intelligently to believe and humbly to adore.

Thus, without coercing the Gospel's words to suit our dogma, nor proving our dogma by any misuse of the words of John, we can see, by a broad yet accurate vision, how Gospel and dogma make one harmony. And thereby, assuredly, our whole spiritual life is enriched. The dogma remains no mere map; and the Gospel is no bewildering, though beautiful, document of ancient Apostolic piety. There have been those who tell us that John's Gospel marks a crisis in Christian history, because it breaks with the narrow Palestinian tradition and abandons its set forms of language, and is accessible to "Alexandrian" ways of thought, spiritualizes the old materialisms, and in fine offers a Christianity "acceptable to culture." Chill and worldly notion, which the Evangelist would have rejected with horror, and from which even we turn, indignant. The Gnostics travelled along that road; the Gnosis is dead, dead its philosophies and spiritualisms:

what lives in the Gospel is, first, the human love which may bring peer and peasant to the side of Jesus weary by the well, bowed at the Apostles' feet, and making Magdalen His messenger; and then, the outpouring of a Spirit which a very child, be he but pure in heart, can recognize and welcome far better than can scholarship; Love at the last is better, as interpreter, than logic. Even the outlined explanations of these pages must be forgotten, in their thin separate poverty: once the mind has found contact with John's mind, and moves freely in his circuit of ideas, the world of his Gospel need no longer be mapped out by diagrams be they never so exact; its air can be breathed, its mountains scaled, its valleys rested in; it can become our home and familiar dwelling-place.

IV

THE WORD OF GOD

WHY does John, in his prologue, describe the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity as the *Word?*

A very brief account of the history of that expression must suffice.

In John's world the term *Logos*, which we translate inadequately *word*, was as much on everybody's tongue as, say, *evolution* has lately been on ours, though its meaning was, as a rule, much more carefully thought out.

Logos means the *reasonable account* which may be given of a thing: the intelligible expression of its nature. It tends, therefore, to define itself in two directions: either as *intelligible*, then it approximates to our *idea*—"The Idea of a University"—or as *expression:* a thought in the brain, a word on the lips. Greek philosophy began six hundred years before Christ, by trying to explain the mani-

fold universe by a single formula, the shorter the better. It was accounted for, say, by "water," or "fire," manifesting itself variously; one immanent, ultimate Fact. This, in itself, is the unseen Thing which underlies all else; the ultimate *account* which can be given of things: their *Logos*.

From the East (presumably) came the notion of, in effect, *two* Ultimates, Spirit and Matter, Light and Dark, Truth and Illusion, of which the conflict, or at least the combination, creates the world-process, and is to be offered as its reasonable explanation, its *Logos*. Plato and Aristotle, in different ways, far too subtle to explain here, combined the notions of One Ultimate "God," and of "matter," definitely distinct from Him, and yet governed and, as it were, "souled" by Him. It was the Stoics who best developed this suggestion: the universe is so indwelt by God as to be, taken as a whole, His adequate *Logos*, or expression, while He, *in it*, is *its Logos*, or living explanation. You have, therefore (to speak briefly I have to speak to some extent inaccurately) God, the Ultimate: God, as containing the universe in Himself:

and God, as expressed outwardly in the universe.

Now, it was the habit of the Greeks, Egyptians, Persians, and perhaps of all ancient religions, to present their theories under a veil of myth—that is, in the shape of a human or human-divine story. Very many beautiful personifying myths developed in which the God, the *Logos*, and the history of the universe were related. One of the most beautiful is that of Osiris in Egypt.

Not only, then, were different theories of the ultimate account to be given of the Universe, and of God's creation and preservation of it, current in the pagan world, decked out, very often, in touching and human mythology, but the Jews, too, of Alexandria made great use of them; of these, the writer whose works best survive is Philo, who died about 50 A.D. These Alexandrian Jews liked to apply Greek philosophy and habits of mind to their own very un-Greek religion, and Philo used the "*logos*" idea very frequently, both in allegorizing the Old Testament, and in constructing a general philosophy. But his was not a great mind, and his system was very

confused, and, indeed, contradictory, and at no point original. Until this was realized, it was often said that John borrowed his *logos* doctrine from Philo. But the divergencies are radical. In Philo, the *Logos* is primarily God's thought, immanent in Himself; in John, His uttered Word: Philo calls it God's First Begotten, in contrast to the world, His Second Begotten: but in John, the Word is the Sole Begotten: Philo's is the image or shadow of God; in John, he who sees the Son sees the Father also. Philo's *Logos* is a real half-way intermediate nature, a link between two separate antagonistic objects. In John, it "mediates" because compenetrating and welding into one two extremes. In Philo, it is Divine: in John, God. And with John it is a human person too, a man, flesh: *that*, all Greek philosophers would have agreed, however divergent else their systems, it could never be, though as man or hero it might be metaphorically portrayed.

Therefore, John neither borrows nor even adopts *logos* doctrines. He is aware of *logos* doctrines, many, beautiful, and in various

measures true. He does not say: "Yours is my doctrine from another point of view"; "There is much to be said for your idea"; "We mean almost the same thing"; and, "Each may learn from the other." He simply takes the term *Logos*, and then declares *his* Doctrine: that the Word is co-Eternal with God; one with, while yet mysteriously other than, the Father. Through Him was made the universe. He is Truth and Life in fulness; He comes, a Light into the world, and in His fulness we, if we will, participate. For He is become Man, and *a* man; and to His welcomers He gives power to become God's children.

THE "WITNESS"

No one can fail to notice the recurrence, in the Fourth Gospel, of the word *witness*, and allied expressions. Practically, what John is trying to offer is an answer to the question: What evidence for your extraordinary doctrine can you provide? And the situation is complicated by his conceiving the question put, first, by the Jews to Our Lord Himself,

and then (though this is less in the forefront) by his readers to John. And again, an external (and to us, unnecessary) complication is introduced by an attempt to accommodate his answer to the requirements of the Jewish law regarding witnesses.

The first external witness is John's own. Whatever else may be said about the writer of this Gospel, this at least is obvious: he gives himself as an eye-witness of historical fact. I cannot see that this can be seriously disputed. Moreover, if the objective reality of what he witnesses is to be doubted, the whole character of his witness is impaired. Over and above incidental phrases like "We beheld His glory,"* and special incidents referred to, like the Water and Blood after the Piercing of the Side: "and he who saw bore witness, and truthful is his witness, and he knows that he speaks the truth;" and phrases where his personality and his affirmation are descried *across* the actual speakers,† you have the quite definite assertions of the character and purpose of the book itself‡

* John i. 14. † John i. 34; iii. 11.
‡ John xx. 30, 31

resting entirely on the reliability of its author.* And the whole sums itself up, perhaps best of all, in the emphatic declaration at the beginning of John's First Epistle.

> That which existed from the Beginning,
> That which we have heard,
> That which we have seen with our eyes,
> That which we have watched and our hands have handled—(Concerning the Word of Life: yes! for the Life was made manifest, and we have seen, and we are bearing witness, and we are announcing to you, the Eternal Life which existed with the Father and was made manifest to us)—
> That which we have seen and have heard
> We are announcing to you, too, in order that you, too, may have fellowship with us . . . yes, these things we are writing, even we, that our joy may be fulfilled!

Could appeal to *personal experience*, full sense experience, be made more emphatic?

But it was clear to St. John and his contemporaries, as to us, that this appeal to personal experience might be taxed with subjectivism, though that word was not at his disposal nor theirs. He had to appeal to some sort of

* John xxi. 24.

evidence, other than his own, which his hearers would start by admitting as valid. Now a Voice to which an even exaggerated authority had been attributed was the Baptist's. Of him and his witness, John, therefore, has much to say. But that witness *presupposed* belief in the Baptist. "You believed the Baptist in all other matters: a fortiori you should believe the whole point *of all his career*, namely, witness to Jesus, Son of Mary." But what is there for those for whom this *argumentum ad hominem* is not valid, who can say: "For us the witness of the Baptist has no cogency"?

I pass over as rapidly as the Evangelist does the appeal to the witness of Moses and the prophets. Christ made that appeal, and the Jews recognized that their sacred books were a legitimate court of appeal; but experience had amply proved that "Moses and the prophets" supplied nothing which would convince a mind undesirous of being convinced; and anyhow that past was rapidly becoming too remote to be of much cogency for that changed world in which St. John was writing. In any case there was a spiritual

opposition between one element of Moses' work and one element of Christ's: through Moses came the law: Christ brought "grace and truth" and freedom.* None the less, what Moses lifted up before men's eyes *was* a symbol, though no more, of that reality which was *Jesus*;† the mysterious manna should have made it easy for men's minds to welcome the True Bread;‡ the Jews did "search" the Scriptures, because they thought that in them they had "eternal life"§—well, it was those very Scriptures that witnessed to Himself. *He* had no need to accuse them before God of spiritual blindness; Moses himself did that, Moses, in whom they had hoped. If really they were believing Moses, they would be believing Him; for about Him Moses wrote. "But if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My words?" Words? No, He had definitely declared:‖ "If they will not believe Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe though one returned from the dead;" and the summing up of the story of "Laza-

* John i. 17. † John iii. 14. ‡ John vi. 32.
§ John v. 39-47. ‖ See Luke xvi. 31.

rus" is justified by the ill consequences (in so many cases) of the miracle worked upon the real Lazarus, and by the failure to convince of the Resurrection itself. Even as Moses and the Law carried no convincing force, so neither did Isaias and the prophets,* for Our Lord here definitely declares, there is a spiritual obstacle in the minds of the Jewish readers which prevents their understanding even what they read, and reading recognize as authoritative.

Our Lord's first appeal is to His own miracles. "The works that My Father has given Me to accomplish, these very works bear witness" to My divine mission.† Yet you will notice that all through this Gospel a belief in Christ due to having seen a miracle, is subordinated as definitely inferior to belief in Him on His own intrinsic merits. The "Works" are a useful—almost a regrettably

* John xii. 38-41.

† John v. 36. *Cf.* John x. 25. "The works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness concerning Me": "In My Father's name," like "which My Father has given Me to do," is important. God's veracity is involved. Were Jesus a liar, or deceived, His divine works would be sufficient to convict His Father of abetting His lie or deception.

inevitable—stimulus to belief. The Messiah was expected to do such things;* had He *not* done them, there would have been *excuse* for disbelief; but now that He has done them, there is no real excuse for not turning *the will towards belief.* Christ has fulfilled a condition promised in order that belief might be the easier. Take some examples. Nathanael is "shocked" into submission by Christ's miracle of clairvoyance. "Because I said I saw thee under the fig-tree, dost thou believe?" Jesus asks, half sadly. "Greater things than *that* shalt thou see." The Samaritan woman, "shocked" in her turn by Christ's having read her thoughts, rushes to the town, relates the incident, and numbers of the townsfolk "believe" because of her "witness." But Christ spends two days there, and "far more" believe because of His words. "And to the woman they said that 'No more because of thy chatter do we believe; for ourselves, we have heard.'"† When the officer from Capharnaum begs Him to cure his son, Our Lord protests, "Unless ye see miracles and portents ye will not be-

* John vii. 3. † John iv. 39-42.

lieve," and thereby extracts a profession of *faith*, antecedent to the working of the miracle. *Then* is the wonder worked, and becomes a confirmation of faith rather than its cause.* After the miracle at Bethesda, Jesus similarly affirms that greater works than this act of beneficence shall the Jews behold, that they may have true grounds for wondering—the spiritual resurrection of the spiritually dead.† In chapter six, verse twenty-six, the attitude of the Jews towards the great miracle of the Bread seems put even *below* wonder-lust; they sought Him not even because they had seen miracles and were ready to proceed to draw conclusions from them, but because He had supplied them with plenty of food.

Jesus is longing to win from the Jews acceptance on His own merits; because of the intrinsic character of His words and message. "If you will not believe Me, at least believe the works;"‡ "Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; failing that, believe for the sake of the very works . . . these and greater shall he do who believes in Me." The works are sufficient to condemn

* John iv. 48-53. † John v. 20. ‡ John x. 38.

the Jews: "If I had not done among them these works, which no man ever did, they would not have had sin; but as it is, they have both seen them and have hated both Me and My Father."* Yet even this strong affirmation follows and is subordinate to a similar claim to the cogency of His words.† The whole episode of St. Thomas's recovery of faith, and Our Lord's approval, primarily, of the belief which does *not* rest upon material signs, throws light on the whole of Christ's feeling about miracles, and even on St. John's, who follows the story of St. Thomas with an acknowledgment of their due function—"Many other signs Jesus did in the presence of His disciples, which have not been written in this book: but these have been written in order that you should believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God."‡

Christ's miracles, therefore, are a sufficient guarantee of the Divine sanction of His message. But they are not the best He can do for us: nor all that He intends to do. After all, the physical cures and even resuscitations had been paralleled, long ago, by other accredited envoys of God. The real difference

* John xv. 24. † John xv. 22. ‡ John xxi. 30, 31

is in the message—a difference affecting alike the nature of the Messenger, and the kind of work which He really intends to be His work; His unique, unshared work, achieved within the soul. It stands to reason, that in the long run the unique quality in Christ can only declare itself through itself; and the unique work done in souls be adequately recognized not by sight, but by faith, issuing, it well may be, into a unique and unmistakable experience.

Our Lord insists that He speaks what He *knows*, and what He alone knows, and what He alone *can* know.

What we know, we speak;
What we have seen, to that bear we witness . . .
No one hath *ascended into heaven* (to discover God's secret)
But He alone (knows it) who *came down from* heaven,
Even the Son of Man Who exists in Heaven.*
What I have seen at My Father's side, I speak.†

* John iii. 11, 13. This is Johannine diction. Maldonatus sees well (ii. 485) that Our Lord does not use this plural of Himself. He considers it a generalization: Men speak of what they know, etc.: so, *too*, I.

† John viii. 38.

The obvious retort to this is: We only have Your word for it. The first reply of Our Lord is:*

"I do *not* merely bear witness to Myself. If I bear witness to Myself, My witness is not true (valid); I have an outside witness: the Baptist. His witness was true; you ought to take it. Still, I do not take My witness from a human creature at all. I have a witness greater than John's: My works. But you do not accept them. There are, too, Moses and the prophets. But neither do you understand *them.*"

And again, in chapter eight, verse thirteen, the Pharisees say:

"You bear witness to Yourself; such witness is worthless."

Now Jesus answers: "Even if I do, My witness is valid. Because I know My Origin and My Destiny. You know neither. Your way of judging is a human way. I judge no one. [Does this very difficult sentence receive its meaning from what follows—*i.e.*, "I, as *Man*, pass no verdicts, not even on My own message"?] But even if I do pass verdict

* John v. 31.

on Myself, My verdict is valid, for I am not alone—but there are Myself and My Father. Now, in your law, it is settled that the evidence of two witnesses must hold good. Well, there are here Myself, the Eternal Son of God; and My Father, Eternal God. You do not know Me, really—nor yet My Father. If you really knew Me, you would know Him too." Here is an *argumentum ad Judæos:* an appeal to the regulation of the Mosaic Law. Two witnesses are needed. For Jesus of Nazareth there *are* two; the Eternal Word who makes, indeed, one Person with the Man Jesus, but is independent in existence of that humanity; and the Eternal Father, Who also sanctions Him.

But, to tell the truth, we are no further forward. "Yes," say the Jews, "we know You say You *know*, that You have *seen*, that You are the Son of God, and God. *But why should we believe You?* We still have to take your word for it. Why should we? As a matter of fact, Your claim seems to us a horrible blasphemy. We have no means of testing Your claim."

Our Lord answers in effect: "You have,

or you should have. There ought to be in you an interior response to My words. Something in you—*you* somehow—ought to leap up and cry, 'Yes, that is true! I *know* it. I affix my seal to it. My whole self is explained by it, and rushes to welcome it.' If it does not, if you have no such affinity with My message, and neither do, nor wish to, nor can, welcome it, well, you are wrong; you are mutilated men; you are dislocated and out of vital communion with the world and with God. You *ought* to experience that unique consciousness which asserts, without tolerating any denial, that *My* words are *God's* words, and true."

But is not this the strangest doctrine? Does it not reduce all the act of faith to mere feeling and emotion?

Whether or no, St. John states this as clearly as possible.

"Men preferred the dark to the Light, because their works were evil . . . he who does the truth comes to the Light, that it may be made manifest how his works are done in God."*

* John iii. 19-21.

"He who accepts His witness, sets his seal to it, that God is truthful."*

"You have never heard the voice of God nor seen His shape; but neither have you His word [His mind, as we should say] living in you, because you do not believe in Him Whom He sent."† . . . I know you, and how you have not the love of God in you. I came in My Father's name, and you do not accept Me; others come in their own name, and them you accept. How *can* you believe, if you accept one another's opinions, and do not seek the Mind of the Only God?"‡

"If a man chooses to do My will, he will *know* whether My doctrine is from God or My own invention.

"You seek to kill Me, because My Word (or Mind) finds no place in you. What I have seen at My Father's side, that I speak; and

* John iii. 33. † John v. 37b, 38.

‡ John v. 42, 43, 44. That is: You hunt for Me—*e.g.*, in the Scriptures; but you do not find Me. You form theories, and inquire about people's "views"; but you can't get the View of God. The word δόξα, which can of course mean *glory*, must needs be rendered here, I think, as I have done. It is unlikely that there is, even, any latent "ambiguity" in John's use of it here. Contrast with vii. 18,

you what you have heard from *your* father, that you do:* (You are God's sons? No!) If God were your Father, you would be loving Me . . . Why cannot you understand My words? because you cannot appreciate My thought. [This is what this difficult sentence practically means.] You are from your father the devil, and you choose to work the lusts of your father . . . He who is of God, hears the words of God: the reason that you do not hear them is that you are not of God."†

All this passage, chapter eight, verses thirty to fifty-nine, is directly to the point.

"If you were blind, you would not have been guilty. But as it is, you say: We see. So your sin remains." There is a double doctrine in this very compressed sentence, if not a triple one. First: You are unseeing; you neither do nor can see: despite your claim to sight. You wilfully prefer the dark. So, from this point of view, to start with, you are guilty. Second: You don't really see, but you say you do, which is equivalent to saying the dark is the Light, and you *teach* that, and mislead the world. This, too, is a horrible

* John viii. 38. † John viii. 42-47.

guilt. Third: You are *right* in saying "you see." That is, you have the power of sight, and the Light is shining for you, and the object of vision is there, and *in your hearts* you are seeing: but you refuse to acknowledge what you see in your conscience, and say that there is nothing there. This is to blind your conscience, and a soul suicide. "I know Mine, and Mine know Me.* You do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. My sheep know My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."†

"He who sets Me at naught, and does not accept My words, has his judge. The word that I spoke, *that* shall judge him at the Last Day."‡ (Notice here again the distinction between ῥήματα, the actual words listened to, and λόγος, their spiritual, vital content which is *not* "heard," but rejected by the soul, and thereby made the occasion of its self-chosen separation.)

"Everyone who is 'of the truth' (*i.e.*, belongs to it, is 'born of' it) hears My voice."§

This Discourse in the Supper room is full

* John x. 14.
† John x. 26, 27.
‡ John xii. 48.
§ John xviii. 37

of apposite sentences; especially John xiv. 6, 10, 17, 24; xv. 16; xix. 22, 24; xvi. 9, 13; xvii. 2, 3, 9. So also is the First Epistle: ii. 19, 20, 24, 27; iii. 1b. 6, 9, 24b; iv. 5, 6 (very strong), 7, 15, 9–12 (very strong too), 18–20. *Cf.* Second Epistle 1, 2.

There are two main elements in all this which are points of anchorage. For *any* supernatural result, God's initiative and grace are necessary. And man's will is free. Mapping out the Eternal Fact in time, this is what happens: There is enough Light in the world, even apart from the Incarnation, for men to know God "naturally," to know him *sufficiently.* The human intellect may muddle its conclusions terribly; may achieve very curious and (in reality) false ideas about God. But it can know Him *enough;* and if in the end it rejects the knowledge possible to it, it does so through evil will. Hence we need not fear to say, that, *in God's judgment,* pagans, the ignorant, scholars and sceptics, may well have that amount of knowledge of God which is possible to their temperament and cast of mind, natural or acquired. But Christ came into the world to give a supernatural know-

ledge of a supernatural union with God. How are we, then, to *give in our adhesion to Christ?* He supplies us with sufficient natural evidence: His miracles, prophecies concerning Him, the character of His sinless life and incomparable preaching, the result in the lives of those who sincerely live by Him: a cumulative argument of which each part multiplies itself into each other part and is not merely added to it. But this is "sufficient evidence" for what exactly? To make it prudent for us to give in our intellectual assent to this: "Christ is God's envoy, and His doctrine is sanctioned by God and therefore true." But what makes us actually give in that assent? Well, sheer reasoning, if it be no more than a natural consent. But such a consent is in any case improbable, because the evidence is not *coercive.* There is no two plus two equals four about it. Grace, therefore; and the assent is supernatural. Grace solicits the attention in the first instance: I look; it illuminates the mind, in the next: I see; it strengthens the will, in the last: I adhere. I "see," "hear," "come," "believe," *am.* But how do I know that has

happened? Well, how do I even know I am alive? or not dreaming? or not hypnotized? By direct intuition. Immediate awareness. I *know* it. It is vital experience. It is no good telling me I'm not alive. And if I believe, it is no good telling me I do not.

Is not this reducing Faith to "feeling"? Not exactly. Mere emotional feeling may be, and often is, quite absent. On a higher level, *reasonable* assent there must be and is. But some other name than feeling must be found for that precise mode of consciousness which awakes and responds to grace. Grace cannot make you get more out of a thing than what is in it: therefore, not out of an argument. Arguments are natural things; therefore, supernatural stuff is not to be got out of them, however much the arguing mind be deluged with grace. The inexperienced may find it hard enough so to dissect themselves as to "realize" that in their assent, and therefore mode of consciousness, is a double element, natural and supernatural. Often an onlooker can see more clearly than can they. But St. Teresa, for example, insists, till she

grows tired of it, on the absolutely indisputable knowledge which the soul has when it receives an authentic communication from God. It simply cannot doubt it. Its intellectual mapping out of the *pros* and *cons* may be hesitating and faulty; but as to the fact, it simply cannot doubt about it, because something has happened which *is* it. It is a vital self-conscious way of being. We repeat, this need not overflow into the emotions: it may be quite a dull experience; but it is a direct one, and under all the soul's sheaths and surfaces.*

Therefore, all alike the Father "draws" to Jesus. Else no one would approach. Even of these, not all yield to His solicitation. They are not His. They oppose Him. But if they are His, they "come" to Christ, for all that is the Father's is His too: therefore they, too, are His. He speaks; they can "hear": He "chooses" them; they welcome His call. Thenceforward none can snatch them out of His hand. But they can snatch

* Much help may be found, by anyone anxious to observe the interaction of the human process of natural assent, and of Divine grace, from *La Crédibilité et l'Apologétique*, ed. 2, 1912, by Fr. A. Gardeil, O.P.

themselves—separate themselves. "Have I not *chosen* you, the Twelve? Yet out of your number, one is a devil." On God's side and Christ's, all is love: yet that love, if it cannot kindle the human heart into a reciprocal glow of heavenly heat, chars it to a cinder.

John is happiest, and therefore writes most easily, when he is not wrestling with "proofs." They are but incidentally drawn in, because of restive thoughts and wills, and actual problems in the early history of the Christian Church. He is not constructing an apologetic, primarily: not seeking to solve the mystery of predestination and perseverance. He is hymning the Communion of the Soul with Christ. He supplies illustrations and authority to the professed and formal theologian, yet not such is he. He would be sorry, almost, were "proofs" in the front rank. He *wants* Christ to be self-sufficient: he exults, to find that He knows His own and His own *know Him*. "*Dilectus meus mihi: et ego illi.*" And humbly, together with the great rapture of incommunicable personal knowledge, comes submission to that Church's doctrine

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to which all Saints, however triumphantly ecstatic, have yielded their unhesitating assent. It remains that

> ". . . The Master is so fair,
> His smile so sweet to fallen men,
> That those who meet Him unaware
> Can never rest on earth again."

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